ALFRED KAZIN: REMEMBERING VARIAN FRY

HOLOCAUST POLITICS
by Leon Wieseltier

FEBRUARY 9, 1998 • $3.50

THE NEW REPUBLIC

THE RIGHT TRACK?

Clinton, the GOP, and the New Politics of Surplus

Sean Wilentz
Jonathan Chait

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PLUS: The Pope in Cuba

TRB • Michael Sean Winters • Anna Husarska • Enrique Krauze

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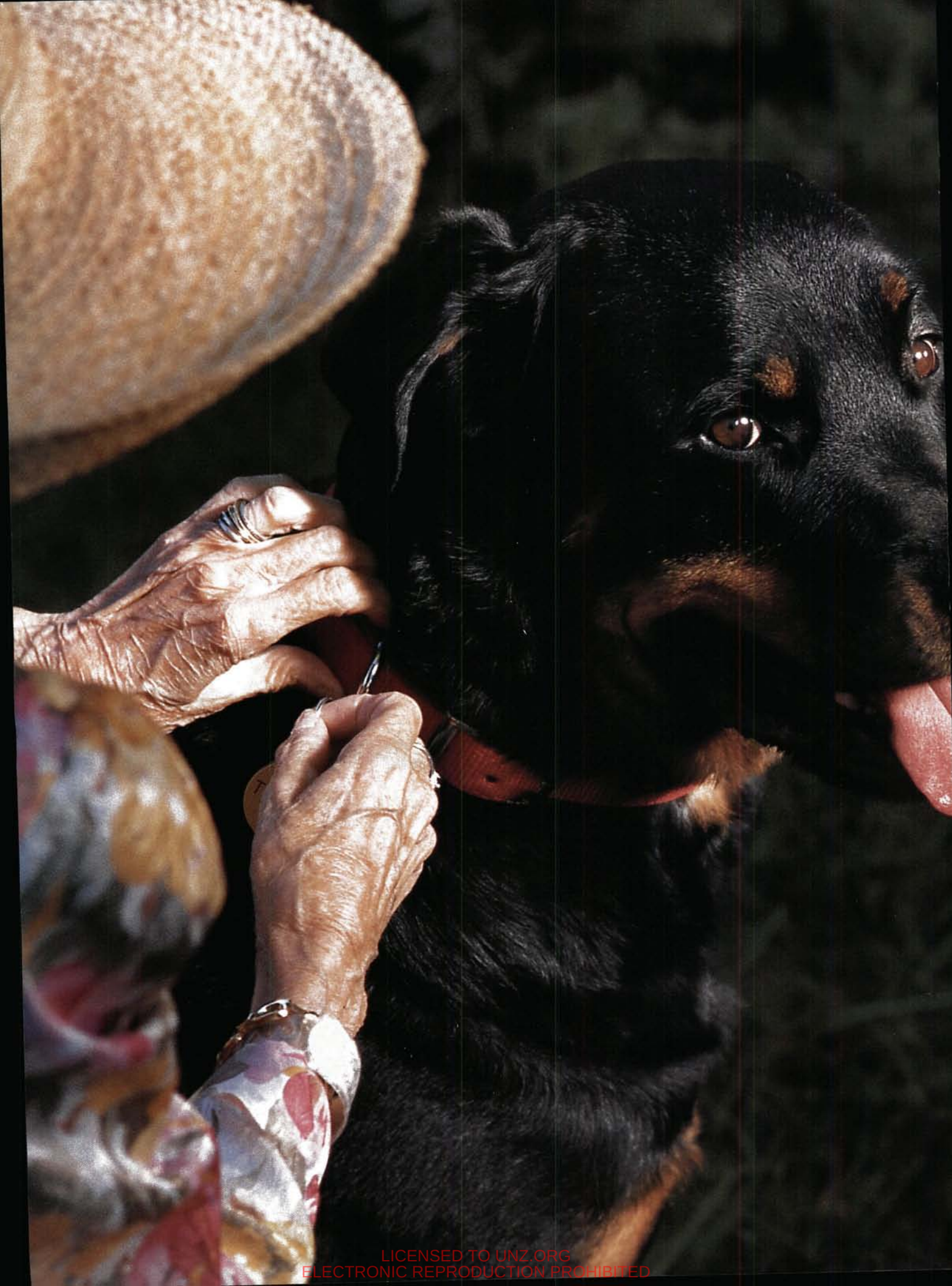

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"Bear could hardly walk. Then, in just a few days, he was his old self again."

SUSAN LLOYD, BEAR'S OWNER
MARLBOROUGH, CONNECTICUT

As a certified therapy dog, Bear has a very important job. Each week, he dispenses good cheer and affection when he visits nursing homes, like the one at Whitney Center in Hamden, Connecticut.

But when he developed arthritis—the same ailment that troubles many of his human friends—his weekly rounds were nearly curtailed.

Luckily for Bear, human disease isn't the only area for which Pfizer searches for cures. Thanks to a treatment made possible by research in veterinary medicine, he was soon up and running again.

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CORRESPONDENCE

Care affairs

To the editors:

If Katherine Eban Finkelstein ("The Sick Business," December 29, 1997), had turned to the professional literature (including studies by the RAND Corporation, MedStat Group, and Harvard University), she would have found that more—not fewer—people receive more—not fewer—services under managed care. She also would have learned that managed care attempts to serve people through integrated and coordinated networks of providers, rather than the former fragmented approach of multiple solo practitioners who failed to communicate with one another and lacked any form of quality accountability.

DAVID K. NACE, M.D.
American Managed Behavioral Healthcare Association
Washington, D.C.

To the editors:

The public was persuaded through specious logic that HMOs would save them money and reduce health care costs through greater efficiency, all without sacrificing quality. But good medicine is an art, not a business. It is patience, careful listening, understanding, and experience. It is not speed, efficiency, mergers, and acquisitions.

Nonetheless, there are credible alternatives to leaving medicine in the hands of business. Oregon, for example, has succeeded in covering everyone in the state while still providing quality care. The Oregon plan entails rationing of care, but rationing that was democratically chosen. The other 49 states would do well to follow Oregon's lead.

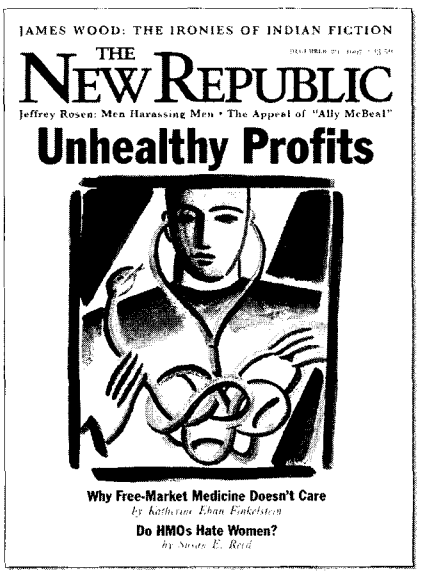
JEFF R. SWARZ
Pelham Manor, New York

On Oncale

To the editors:

It would appear that Jeffrey Rosen does not appreciate the difference between what he calls "sexual expression" and acts that assault, humiliate, harm, and otherwise subordinate ("Men Behaving Badly," December 29, 1997). In his summary of the *Oncale* case, Rosen notes only that Oncale's "supervisor allegedly put his penis on Oncale's head." As the organizer of the ad hoc coalition of 14 groups that filed the amicus brief written by Catharine A. MacKinnon in support of Joseph Oncale, I wish to point out that Oncale's lawsuit claims that while he was employed on an offshore oil rig he was *repeatedly* harassed both verbally and physically by a male supervisor *and two male coworkers*. On one occasion, while showering in a one-person stall, Oncale was seized by a coworker and lifted up by his knees. Then, says Oncale, the supervisor "grabs the bar of soap and rubbed it between the cheeks of my ass and tells me ... they're fixing to fuck me." Soon after, Oncale quit, believing that "if I didn't leave my job ... I would be raped."

Rosen is entitled to argue that Oncale should be denied his day in court, just as we are entitled to argue that the same-sex sexual assault he suffered at work should be actionable as sex discrimination under Title VII regardless of the sex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NEW REPUBLIC
Jeffrey Rosen: Men Harassing Men • The Appeal of "Ally McBeal"
Unhealthy Profits
Why Free-Market Medicine Doesn't Care
by Katherine Eban Finkelstein
Do HMOs Hate Women?
by Susan E. Reid

or sexual orientation of the parties. Rosen crosses a line, however, when he minimizes and misrepresents what was done to the plaintiff.

JOHN STOLTENBERG
Brooklyn, New York

Jeffrey Rosen replies:

I hope my piece made clear that I sympathize with the indignities that Joseph Oncale suffered. I didn't linger over the gory details of his allegations because none of them, it seems to me, makes out a plausible case of gender discrimination. Indeed, their severity suggests that they should be actionable under traditional principles of tort and criminal law, such as battery or attempted rape.

Nixon's obsessions

To the editors:

Martin Peretz has found that on one of the recently published Watergate tapes, he is referred to as "this left-wing Harvard professor ... Pomerantz, or whatever" ("I'm not Pomerantz," December 29, 1997). From this he concludes that "Nixon was obsessed with Jews." Peretz is a little off the mark.

Nixon was indeed obsessed with everyone he considered a political enemy. This included liberal Jews (especially big donors to George McGovern's presidential campaign, like Peretz). It also included liberal WASPs, liberal Catholics, liberal businessmen, left-wingers, right-wingers—and a double hex on them if they were rich.

As for Jews in general, it would be more accurate to say that Nixon was fascinated by their intelligence and skill. That is why he filled powerful positions in his administration with an extraordinary number of Jews—including Arthur Burns, Herbert Stein, Ben Stein, Bruce Herschenson, Richard Nathan, Alan Greenspan, Laurence Silberman, Murray Weidenbaum, Arnold Weber, Helmut Sonnenfeldt, William Safire, Ronald Berman, Henry Kissinger, and myself.

Peretz says that if Kissinger had not been at Nixon's side during the Six Day War, the U.S. might not have resupplied Israel. But I can attest to the fact that Nixon's admiration for Israel, personal as well as strategic, considerably predated the Kissinger connection. I can also attest that during the Yom Kippur War it was Nixon himself who overrode the qualms of his national security advisers to resupply Israel speedily and abundantly.

I suggest that Mr. Peretz would be feeling much less anxious today about American policy toward Israel if more of his Clintonite friends were "obsessed" with Jews the way Richard Nixon was.

LEONARD GARMENT
Washington, D.C.

History lessons

To the editors:

It is Marc Champion's article ("On Edge," December 29, 1997), not Croatia's history books, that is designed "not to teach tolerance." Croatia passed her tolerance test long ago with the adoption of articles 14 and 15 of the constitution, providing for minority rights and equality before the law. It is time to put the Serbs to the test. They must abandon the quest for Greater Serbia and accept the independence of Croatia. That requires new history texts reporting the demise of Yugoslavia, the rebirth of Croatia, and the truth about the war—not cosmetic niceties.

DOMAGOJ ŠOLA
Consul General of the Republic of Croatia
Cleveland, Ohio

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

A Weekly Journal of Opinion

FEBRUARY 9, 1998

FOUNDED 1914
WASHINGTON, D.C.
ISSUE 4,334

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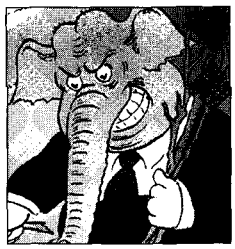

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THE NEW REPUBLIC, Vol. 218, Number 6, Issue 4,334, February 9, 1998. (Printed in the U.S. on January 21, 1998.) Published weekly (except for combined issues dated Jan. 5 & 12, July 20 & 27, Aug. 17 & 24, and Sept. 14 & 21, 1998) at 1220 19th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036. Telephone (202) 331-7494. The New Republic Advertising Sales Office (212) 702-4882. Yearly subscriptions, $59.94; foreign, $99.94 (U.S. funds); Canada, $79.94 (U.S. funds). Back issues, $3.50 (includes postage & handling).

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(ISSN 0028-6583). Periodicals postage paid at Washington, DC, and additional mailing offices. Rights and permissions: fax 202-331-0275. Indexed in Readers' Guide, Media Review Digest, Microform, Canadian Periodical Index, CD-ROM, issue and article copies are available through University Microfilms Intnl., 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106. Telephone 1-800-521-0600. Internet mail address: tnr@aol.com Member, Audit Bureau of Circulations. Unsolicited manuscripts can be returned only if accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Subscribers: Please send all remittances, changes of address, and subscription inquiries to Subscription Service Dept., The New Republic, P.O. Box 37298, Boone, IA 50037-0298. For subscription problems call 1-800-827-1289.

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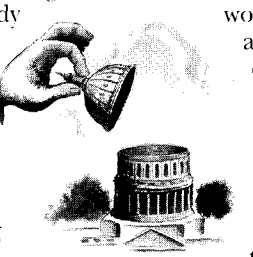
FROM WASHINGTON

Castro inconvertible

Whatever its political impact on Cuba, John Paul II's tour of the island may well bolster opposition to the U.S. ban on trade with Fidel Castro's Communist redoubt. The Pope was blunt in his condemnation of the embargo, adding the Vatican's voice to an already growing chorus of opposition. Critics now include not only perennial liberal advocates of engagement with Castro, but also the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and Lloyd Bentsen, whose old job as treasury secretary included enforcing the ban.



The case against the embargo comes in various styles. Liberals (and the Pope) emphasize the hardships it imposes on the Cuban people; free-marketeers, the senselessness of restraining trade. Foreign-policy types love any opportunity to draw a dictator out of his shell. But the basic contentions are that the embargo may actually have strengthened Castro by giving him a scapegoat; that any justification for the embargo vanished with the Soviet Union; and that lifting it now would liberate Cuba, because Castro would lose the last excuse for his failures, and because democracy and Pepsi flow together. "No Sanctions, No Castro," reasons columnist James K. Glassman; end the embargo, he writes, and "the result, before very long, will be a thriving, Castro-less Cuba, a diamond crescent glistening in the blue Caribbean Sea...."

Wow! The one concession Fidel Castro most fervently demands from the United States is also the one policy change that would bring him down. If you think this sounds too good to be true, I agree. The U.S. embargo is indeed an unsatisfactory policy, one which imposes costs on both the Cuban people and the United States. But it is easy to overstate those costs, and the policy is not without benefits—even 37 years after President Eisenhower adopted it in response to Castro's confiscation of U.S. businesses on the island.

For every anti-embargo argument, there is a pro-embargo rejoinder. Does the embargo hurt the Cuban people? A bit, though far less than communism itself. And since the end of Cuba's Soviet subsidy, the U.S. has licensed donations of more than $227 million in medical supplies, plus $1 billion in humanitarian aid—mainly in the form of cash remittances from Cuban exiles to family back home. Is it hypocritical of Miami Cubans to back the embargo while sending dollars that prop up Cuba's economy? Yes, but at least their cash goes to those who really need it. (Actually, Castro's government benefits, too. U.S. phone companies pay Cuba tens of millions of dollars annually for connecting long-distance calls between the U.S. and the island.)

Does the embargo provide Castro with a political self-justification? Yes, but most of the people I've met in Cuba treated Castro's embargo-bashing as just another official lie. Lifting the embargo would also legitimize him by allowing him to claim victory over the *Yanquis*.

Does the Helms-Burton Act create diplomatic hassles with our Canadian and European friends? Yes, but basically the allies' complaints are phony. Ostensibly, they objected to the "extraterritoriality" of the law's provision permitting Americans to sue foreign firms that use nationalized U.S. property in Cuba. Their real motives, though, were anti-American posturing and a fear of similar laws aimed at trade with Iran. Anyway, the provision has never been enforced; Clinton suspended it in exchange for European condemnations of Castro's human rights abuses. Not a bad result.

Isn't it hypocritical to trade with China while stiffing Cuba? Yes, but the results of our dealings with Beijing hardly support the view that trade leads to the spontaneous generation of freedom. True, Cuba is much smaller and closer to the United States and thus more susceptible to American penetration. But it also has a far less open economy than China's, one in which Fidel Castro controls the minutest of decisions. Repeating a common misconception, Glassman says the U.S. embargo prohibits Americans from "buying things from [Cubans]." But "Cubans" aren't allowed to sell; by law, foreign trade is a state monopoly in Cuba. Trading with Cuba means trading with Castro. Canadian businesses in Cuba may hire only state-selected workers; most of their wages are remitted to Castro. Would American companies agree to work under those terms? Should they?

Forecasts of a glittering post-embargo

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

FEBRUARY 9, 1998

SEX, LIES, AND AUDIOTAPE

As this issue of THE NEW REPUBLIC goes to press, strange but strong accusations are being made against the president of the United States. The media has reported the existence of taped conversations in which a former White House intern claims that she had an 18-month affair with President Clinton. That's the strange part of the story; sleazy and reckless as it would be, a presidential tryst with a young woman not his wife would be neither unprecedented, nor, for the still remarkably popular Bill Clinton, inherently disqualifying.

What's serious, though, is the suggestion, apparently made by the former intern in some of the taped conversations, that the president and his close friend, Washington lawyer Vernon Jordan, encouraged her to lie about her relationship with the president if she were asked about it by lawyers for Paula Jones, who is suing the president for sexual harassment.

And so the country is at the brink of a sexually tinged political scandal that carries many times more potential for tawdry national psychodrama than, say, the Clarence Thomas-Anita Hill case. (Monica Lewinsky already has a new lawyer; the publicist will be along shortly.) All the more reason to try to approach the matter as coolly as possible.

One thing to keep clearly in mind is that the charges of subornation of perjury, if proven in their worst form, are serious and possibly even disqualifying for the president. But another point to remain calm about is that there is, so far, no proof. We do not yet know exactly what, if anything, the president or Jordan really did tell Lewinsky to do. And since the issue would pit her word against theirs, we may never be able to know, at least not beyond a reasonable doubt.

Another lesson, surely, is that we are reaping what was sown in the Supreme Court's unanimous but questionable ruling last summer in the matter of *Clinton* v. *Jones*. In holding that a sitting president shouldn't be immune from civil suits, even those relating to conduct before taking office, the justices placed great weight on their prediction that such suits wouldn't unduly interfere with the president's official duties. Aside from responding to the other side's discovery requests, the Court suggested optimistically, the details of the defense could be delegated to the president's lawyers—with few other spillover effects on the president or on the presidency itself. Even before the Monica Lewinsky story developed, it was already clear from such events as the media circus surrounding the president's deposition in the Jones case that the Court's prediction was wrong. Now it is even clearer. If Clinton is crippled by this affair, it will be a crippling wholly derivative of the Jones case.

We are also witnessing the consequences of the rise and convergence of two originally reformist but now dangerously elastic bodies of law: sexual harassment law on one hand, and the independent counsel statute on the other. First, there is sexual harassment. Why were Paula Jones's lawyers trolling the planet for the president's alleged mistresses in the first place? Their implausible theory is that evidence of sexual misconduct while in office might establish a pattern or practice of harassment in Arkansas. But, in fact, the connection between consensual affairs in Washington and alleged gender discrimination in Arkansas is hard to discern. Without the usual procedural protections accorded those accused of genuine sexual misconduct, such as rape, sexual harassment law has become an excuse for plaintiffs and their supporters to rummage through an official's private life, armed with the force of federal law.

Next, the independent counsel statute. Kenneth Starr was originally appointed to investigate Whitewater. (Remember that?) Several months ago, when he began hunting around Arkansas for evidence of the president's past sexual improprieties in the hopes of finding former mistresses in whom Clinton may have confided about Whitewater, Starr was roundly criticized for transgressing the bounds of his mandate. Now, presented with a claim that Clinton and/or Jordan may have counseled someone to lie under oath in the Jones case, Starr reportedly wired a former White House aide, Linda Tripp, with a microphone so that she could surreptitiously record conversations with Lewinsky. He asked his judicial overseers for an expansion of his jurisdiction, and his request, as a matter of course, was granted. Also as a matter of course, leaks to the media followed soon thereafter.

With any luck, one consequence of this sorry affair will be a sober bipartisan review by Congress of the dysfunctional sexual harassment and independent counsel statutes. For now, the constitutional contradictions built into the independent counsel statute are at their breaking point. Yes, suborning perjury is an indictable offense (though one that's rarely charged by prosecutors operating under rules of ordinary prosecutorial discretion). But can the president of the United States be

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indicted by an independent-counsel-convened grand jury or anyone else? From Robert Bork to Walter Dellinger, Justice Department officials have held that the president himself can't be indicted, only impeached. Simply by creating the impeachment mechanism, the Founders seemed to suggest that the adjudication of presidential transgressions should be removed from the purview of ordinary criminal law. A president, they intended, may be indicted, but only after first being impeached and removed from office. (Otherwise, of course, he could always just pardon himself.)

The "I" word—impeachment—is already in the air. Absent more conclusive evidence, we're not climbing on that bandwagon. But, in a purely legal and constitutional sense, such talk is appropriate. Under the Constitution, a congressional investigation is the preferred venue for airing allegations of serious misconduct by the president—and for deciding if they warrant his removal from office. Such an investigation, although inevitably partisan, would certainly be preferable to leaving the decision to an unelected and hence unaccountable independent counsel. We, however, doubt that the Republicans would have the courage to mount such an inquiry. Why should they? Ken Starr is already quite effectively damaging the president, and the president is already quite effectively damaging himself. •

NOTEBOOK

PAPAL BULL: Recent emanations from the Vatican have confirmed once again the distinction between religious and political leadership. And we are not referring to the ambiguous spectacle of the Pope standing on the Havana airport tarmac, absorbing a lecture from Fidel Castro on the wonders of Cuban socialism and the "genocide" committed by the United States against Cuba. Rather, John Paul II's strangest recent pronouncement concerned the situation in Iraq. Many horrible things—evil things—have been or are being done by the dictator of that unhappy country. These include real genocide against Kurds and Shiite Muslims; the systematic deprivation of the human rights of everyone else; and the construction of terrible biological and chemical weapons. But, in his annual state of the world address, the Holy Father mentioned none of that; he chose to condemn only the "pitiless embargo" imposed on the country by the United Nations. "The weak and the innocent cannot pay for the mistakes for which they are not responsible," he intoned—the "mistakes" presumably being the aggression and violations of international law by Saddam Hussein that caused the U.N. Security Council to adopt the sanctions. In attempting to delegitimize the sanctions, the Pope legitimized Saddam's grievance against the world. In attempting to give succor to the suffering people of Iraq, the Pope's address gave succor to their oppressor instead.

NOT STRINGENT ENOUGH: On January 14, Serge Schmemann reported in *The New York Times* that Israel would refuse to make further withdrawals from the West Bank "unless the Palestinians satisfied a series of stringent conditions." To Schmemann, at least, it was clear that these conditions were spurious attempts to stall the peace process, a "long series of demands" that were signs of a "hard-line tone" among a Cabinet that contains a "lone moderate voice." And what were these unreasonable demands? "The adoption of a new Palestinian National Charter that would not include calls for Israel's destruction," for one. What's worse, Schmemann reported, the Netanyahu government tried to disguise its bad faith by claiming that these demands were contained in an American "note for the record" that was included in the Hebron accords a year ago. In fact, according to Schmemann, "the 'note for the record' signed by Warren Christopher ... included none of these requirements." Gotcha, Bibi! But it seems that Schmemann filed his copy too soon. Every one of the new "long series of demands" was in fact contained in the "note for the record," authored and signed by U.S. envoy Dennis Ross. Schmemann's note "signed by Warren Christopher" was an entirely different document, containing just anodyne language about "the spirit of reciprocity." In his eagerness to catch Netanyahu's ruse, Schmemann made a blatant error of fact. And the *Times*' correction was no better. While it acknowledged that the Christopher letter "was not at issue," and that Netanyahu was referring to the Ross note, it went on to describe the note in this manner: "It includes general obligations that the Israelis say will now be met if the Palestinian Authority complies with the new, specific demands." But the whole point is that the demands are not "new"; they are included in the Ross note itself. All Netanyahu's Cabinet demanded was that Arafat fulfill his obligations under the Hebron accord before Israel makes further concessions. Only in the minds of Schmemann and the *Times* does this seem like a clever diplomatic ruse. On this side of the looking glass, it is clear that Netanyahu's demands were neither "new" nor unreasonable. They may have been "stringent," but that's not the same as being unreasonable.

DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS: In last week's issue, Daniel J. Kevles's review of *Image and Logic: A Material Culture of Microphysics*, by Peter Galison, listed the publisher of the book incorrectly. It is published by the University of Chicago Press. In addition, our lead editorial of January 26 reported that Senator Ted Kennedy's plan to reduce the Social Security payroll tax to 5.3 percent for both employers and employees would raise the FICA taxes of every individual taxpayer with an income above $68,400. As many readers have pointed out, our math was a little off. Actually, the change would raise taxes for those who make more than $80,000. We apologize for the errors. •

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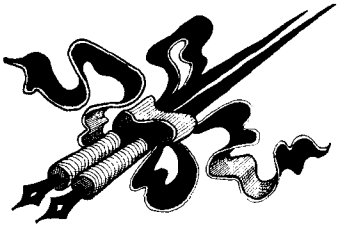
THE HARD QUESTIONS

BAD SEED

By Jean Bethke Elshtain

As you've probably heard by now, Chicago physicist Richard Seed wants to clone a human being sometime over the next year and a half. He does not merely want it for the good of science, mind you, he wants it for his own glory as well. He wants to be the first. He wants to win a Nobel Prize. "The first person to produce a healthy human clone will be the winner of the Super Bowl," he gushes. "The second person will be the loser." Nothing will stand in Seed's way—not even the law. If the U.S. won't let him conduct his experiment, then, he insists, he will go offshore and clone people in Mexico.

These are audacious statements, to be sure. But they are not as audacious as Seed's other claim: namely, that God supports his endeavor because God wants us to be just like him, and God gave us the power to clone. One wonders where Seed learned his theology. In the Hebrew and Christian traditions, Seed's presumptive reference point, we are called to be co-creators, to participate in creation rather than to dominate and attain mastery over it. The Judeo-Christian tradition is all about acting morally with a humble sense of limit. To seek to be identical to God is idolatry; it is, quite literally, the sin of pride.



Seed has also speculated about introducing immortality into human life, so we could all live forever, "like God." But God doesn't "live" forever. God has no beginning or end. And God is not just a magnified form of a human being. Seed is guilty of what Vaclav Havel calls the "arrogant anthropocentrism" that has so ravaged this century.

Seed is blithely unaware of this—or, at least, he doesn't acknowledge it. And, even scarier, people seem to be playing along. Having defined God in human terms (God is like us, only more so), many Americans are convinced that we should propel ourselves forward with nary a backward glance. If we *can* do it, we must do it. Meanwhile, a corollary to this belief has sprung up: If we can do it, why not do it? This, in sum, is the argument of Harvard Law Professor Laurence Tribe, who opined in *The New York Times* that he hadn't heard a convincing argument *against* cloning, and besides, it's a human right.

Maybe there's something appealing about such "freedom." But where does it take us? We've become so entranced by the notion that the self is merely the sum total of a person's choices that we have lost any moral framework for evaluating those choices. The upshot is a form of self-assertion that lays claim to human mastery and ambition—and, in so doing, creates a spiritual wasteland.

Indeed, such an understanding of persons lies at the foundation of two ideological projects that bedevil modern society. Those projects are untrammeled individualism, on one hand, and collectivism, on the other. Both projects see order as something humans must impose themselves. In the latter instance the imposition of order comes from above, once the "iron band of totalitarianism" (to use Hannah Arendt's memorable phrase) has forced people together. Its moral flaws are self-evident.

The rule of sovereign selves, however, is harder to criticize. This is because we inhabit a world in which we expect the concatenation of individual human choices to lead, automatically, to a moral end. We want to do it; therefore, we should do it.

But this is as ludicrous as the notion that unregulated markets will maximize positive good if left to their own devices. There is a powerful theoretical and social monism at work, fueling a project that celebrates human freedom but erodes our capacity to evaluate its consequences, thus destroying authentic moral freedom and responsibility. In a world in which the market reigns in all things, everything, finally, has the same value. We lose the ability to distinguish between one act or another; one claim or another; one argument or another.

Seed may not be particularly concerned with ethical and moral restraint anyway, but he does deny, vehemently, that his plan would be unethical or immoral. He would have the world believe his is an act of benevolence toward the unfortunate. Seed claims that infertile couples the world over are beating down his door, swamping his e-mail, clamoring: "Don't let them stop you." As he describes it, those who would stand in his way must be churlish, awful persons whose hearts harden when confronted with desperation.

But is it better to turn children into objects and products? Better to risk the threat of a damaging biogenetic uniformity, since much of the basic genetic information that goes into the creation of a child from two parents emerges as a result of sexual reproduction, something not replicable by definition when you pick one parent to clone? Better to embark on an experimental course that would likely result in unused "products" that didn't quite make it to the end of the conveyor belt and that no one wants?

No, there should be no Nobel Prize for this. Perhaps Seed can collaborate with Dr. Kevorkian and create a Mexico-Michigan axis. The creatures nobody wants can be shipped to Kevorkian for easy dispatch to spare their suffering. That will make more room for the Seed clones. Seed and Kevorkian are the Bobbsey Twins of our moral disorder.•

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ON THE HILL

HAGELIANISM

By Jason Zengerle

Except for 1968, when he served as an Army sergeant in Vietnam, Nebraska Senator Chuck Hagel has usually been in the right place at the right time. In 1980, he worked on the Reagan campaign and was rewarded with a presidential appointment to the Veterans Administration. In 1982, he scraped together $5,000—his net worth—and invested it in a start-up telecommunications firm that eventually became the nation's second largest independent cell-phone company, making Hagel a multimillionaire. And, last year, as a freshman Republican senator, Hagel was assigned to chair a ho-hum foreign relations subcommittee that has now been given a not-so-boring assignment: it gets first crack at the international agreement to curb global warming, if and when Clinton submits it to the Senate for ratification.

Granted, that probably won't happen any time soon. Republican senators are lining up to pronounce the Kyoto treaty, which still awaits President Clinton's signature, "dead on arrival," because U.S. negotiators agreed to reduce American greenhouse gas emissions but failed to secure commitments from developing nations to do the same. As a result, the Clinton administration doesn't plan to send the agreement to the Senate until it has won concessions from some developing nations.

But that doesn't mean the treaty's critics intend to let the issue go away. Already, Republicans are promising hearings, and they are discussing resolutions demanding the treaty's immediate submission for a Senate vote. In addition, Republicans have their sights trained on $5 billion in environmental tax incentives that the White House is proposing. And Hagel, who led the Senate's observer delegation in Kyoto, is spearheading the anti-treaty effort. "He's done a great job so far," gushes an official with the Global Climate Coalition, a group of trade associations opposed to the treaty. "I fully expect he'll keep it up."

That Hagel is even involved, much less prominent in the climate-change debate is revealing. Unlike most vocal Senate critics—such as West Virginia Democrat Robert Byrd or Wyoming Republican Mike Enzi, both of whom represent coal-producing states—Hagel comes from a state that doesn't have an obvious stake in the pact. Although the right-leaning American Farm Bureau vociferously opposes the treaty, saying it will drive up fuel and fertilizer prices, most other major agricultural organizations have no official position. And, in Nebraska, many farmers are hardly aware that the issue even exists. "Large hog operations are the burning issue," says Tom Larson, one of the few Nebraska farmers who does care about global warming. "That's about an eight or a nine. Global warming is a point five."

Treaty supporters point suspiciously to the fact that Hagel has received some large campaign contributions from polluting industries since he took on the issue. But Hagel's opposition to the Kyoto treaty probably has more to do with political entrepreneurship than fund-raising guile. Through sheer force of will—and the helpful pretense of his subcommittee chairmanship—Hagel has made himself an authority on an issue that, only a year ago, he and most of his colleagues knew or cared nothing about. As he did with cell phones, Hagel got in early on a hot property. And now that global warming has taken center stage, Hagel and many of his GOP colleagues sense an opportunity. Frustrated by a president who has thrown them nothing but bite-sized and anodyne policy proposals for the past few years, Republicans are hoping that the global warming treaty will allow a replay of the last time Clinton tackled a big-picture issue. "The Clinton health care plan pales in comparison," Steve Forbes enthused. Throw in the fact that global warming is closely identified with the likely Democratic presidential nominee for 2000—"It isn't good enough for Vice President Gore to get up for five minutes and tell everybody how great this is," grouses Hagel—and it's no wonder Republicans think the treaty is a fat target.

But Republicans, famous for self-inflicted black eyes on the environment, must proceed with caution. In the run-up to Kyoto, opponents of a global warming treaty focused primarily on what they called the double standard: the fact that developing nations wouldn't have to cut emissions. Industry opponents of the treaty spent $13 million on an ad campaign advancing this argument. And Hagel, along with Byrd, drafted a Senate resolution (adopted 95 to zero) that made developing-nation participation a condition for U.S. ratification.

The developing-nation issue is valid, and legislators like Hagel deserve credit for raising it. China, India, Brazil, and Mexico will be among the world's leading greenhouse gas emitters by 2015, so any treaty that does not reduce emissions in those countries would be pointless. Also, if developing nations weren't subject to the same regulations as the U.S., American companies—as they have attested—might move domestic factories overseas to avoid the regulatory burden.

But now that the administration has promised to secure meaningful participation from key developing nations—a difficult task, to be sure, but one that Clinton and Gore know is essential—treaty opponents could lose their best argument. This is why Hagel wants the White House to submit the treaty right away—so that it can be defeated. "He's obligated to bring it to the Senate," Hagel says with a hint of exasperation. "It's only fair, it's

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only American, it's only honest. To do otherwise, to do less than that, is dishonest and deceitful."

If the developing-nation issue is taken off the table, the case against the Kyoto treaty becomes weaker—and the motives of some treaty opponents more transparent. Although Hagel practically bristles at the suggestion that he interjected the developing-nation issue into the debate solely as a deal killer, he admits that he would vote against the treaty even if it eventually included binding commitments from developing nations. "I don't agree with [the treaty]," Hagel says. "I think it's wrong, whether or not every nation agrees to it." Hagel contends that the treaty will erode American sovereignty. "This is the United Nations, for the first time ever ... having the power to dictate to a nation, to the United States, how much energy it can use, what kind of energy it can use," Hagel warns. "It gives this United Nations organization the power to go in and inspect, to shut down, to fine, and what recourse do our people have? To go to The Hague?" Of course, that logic would preclude American participation in practically any international agreement, including the chemical weapons treaty, which Hagel voted to ratify.

Certainly, Hagel could get political mileage out of the Kyoto treaty's economic effects. "This treaty would have devastating impacts on our economy, on our standard of living, on our jobs, on everything we do," Hagel says. And Hagel can cite reams of economic studies—most of them commissioned by the treaty's industry opponents or by pro-business think tanks—predicting massive job losses plus skyrocketing energy and fuel prices. Trouble is, such studies are notoriously unreliable when it comes to environmental regulation. Very few of them consider the economic costs of not doing anything to address climate change. Moreover, economists have yet to devise a model that effectively accounts for technological innovation. Past antipollution regulation has often prodded industries to invent new technologies that increase productivity and help offset the cost of the regulation. It's for this reason that the Clinton administration, to the consternation of many of the treaty's critics, has refused to come up with its own cost estimates. As Janet Yellen, the chairwoman of the President's Council of Economic Advisers, testified at a Senate hearing last July, "the effort to develop a model or small set of models that can give us a definitive answer concerning the economic impacts of a given climate-change policy is futile."

If all else fails, Hagel and other treaty opponents will try to sow doubt about the scientific evidence on global warming. "The science is very uncertain on this, even contradictory on it," Hagel says. "Meteorologists can't even tell you from forty-eight hours to forty-eight hours what kind of weather we're going to have. In Kyoto they were talking about one-hundred-year weather patterns." But attacks on the validity of global warming, supported only by a diminishing but vocal group of scientists, tend to have little resonance with the American public—65 percent of whom, according to the most recent polling data, view global warming as a problem that needs to be addressed.

And that sentiment could intensify if Hagel and some of his GOP colleagues become too strident. Already, there appears to be friction between the Senate resolution's co-authors, Byrd and Hagel, over the latter's performance at the Kyoto conference. Byrd's office was said to be unhappy with a Hagel press release from Kyoto that described Byrd, like Hagel, as "strongly opposed" to the administration's plan to withhold the treaty from the Senate for ratification. Where Hagel has nothing but scorn for the deal the U.S. struck in Kyoto, Byrd has called the treaty "a significant new beginning" and "a worthwhile work in progress." And, although Byrd would still vote against the treaty because of the developing-nation issue, he has given the impression he'll drop his opposition if the Clinton administration secures commitments from developing nations and takes steps to offset the short-term economic pain to Byrd's constituents. (How does the Robert C. Byrd Emissions Trading Center in Wheeling, West Virginia, sound?) After all, what reason would Byrd have left to oppose the treaty? It's a question that, at some point, Hagel and other Republicans will need to ask themselves.•

Why Republicans can't count.

NON-CENSUS

By Matthew M. Hoffman

You don't need a degree in statistics to understand that the techniques you might use to count a relatively small number of people—say, the members of Congress—might not work when taking a census of the American population as a whole. It is simply impossible to line up 250 million people in a room and count heads.

That basic fact cost Martha Farnsworth Riche her job last week. Riche, who resigned as director of the Census Bureau, was the latest casualty of the crusade by House Republicans to block the bureau from changing its method of counting Americans in 2000. The bureau believes that a method called sampling will produce a more accurate count at national, state, and local levels, while saving taxpayers more than $675 million. Republicans counter that sampling is speculative and potentially unconstitutional. But the more likely source of their concerns is partisan arithmetic. They fear that the people most likely to be missed in a traditional count—African Americans, Hispanics, American Indians living on reservations, and rural home renters—will vote Democratic. Since congressional apportionment is

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based on the census, sampling could tip the balance in Congress toward Democrats.

While it's debatable whether that would really happen, the Republicans are clearly worried. Last summer, they tried to attach a sampling ban to an emergency bill that would have paid for American flood relief and U.S. operations in Bosnia. President Clinton vetoed that bill, but House Republicans responded during the fall by creating a new subcommittee to oversee the census and by authorizing private citizens, federal agencies, members of Congress, and the speaker of the House to file lawsuits to block sampling. Riche's resignation suggests that the fight will continue, perhaps until the end of the decade. And it illustrates the major danger in the Republicans' strategy. Tinkering with the census threatens to reopen a divisive political debate over reapportionment of the kind that has produced catastrophic results in the past.

The idea behind sampling is simple. Suppose you wanted to count the number of fish in a very large lake. To accomplish this goal, you catch as many fish as you can, tag them, and throw them back. The next day, you go back and catch a random sample of 100 fish and discover that only 90 of them have tags. By comparing the results of the two counts, you might estimate that the initial count missed some ten percent of the fish population.

Variations on this capture-recapture methodology can also be used to estimate human populations. In 1990, the bureau conducted a traditional head count, attempting to reach every person in the United States through mailed questionnaires and follow-up visits by enumerators. Subsequently, it conducted what it dubbed a post-enumeration survey. It selected various random samples of the population, made more detailed counts of those samples, and then used those results to measure the accuracy of the initial count. It concluded that the initial count had missed 1.8 percent of the population.

More significant than the total undercount was its uneven distribution. The bureau's preliminary figures indicated that the net undercount was only 0.6 percent in New Hampshire, but 3.7 percent in California, 4.5 percent in New Mexico, and 5.0 percent in the District of Columbia. African Americans were undercounted in the 1990 census by 4.4 percent, Hispanics at a rate of 5.0 percent, and American Indians living on reservations at an astonishing 12.2 percent. By contrast, the net undercount for non-Hispanic whites was only 0.7 percent.

Armed with this information, the bureau recommended adjusting the 1990 census to correct for the undercount. Robert Mosbacher, President Bush's secretary of commerce, vetoed the suggestion, citing doubts that adjustment would improve the census's accuracy. The Supreme Court later upheld that decision, ruling that Congress had delegated virtually unlimited power over the conduct of the census to the secretary. But with a Democrat in the White House, the bureau is trying again.

Under the new proposal, the census would have three phases. In the first phase, bureau officials would attempt to mail questionnaires to every household in the country, as they have done in the past. The bureau estimates that 67 percent of households would respond. In the second phase, the bureau would send enumerators to visit households that do not respond. But rather than trying to dispatch agents to all of these households, as it has in the past, the bureau would select a random sample of nonresponding households sufficient to boost the total response rate to 90 percent in each census "tract"—a geographical division roughly equivalent to a neighborhood. In the third phase, the bureau would classify each of the nation's seven million census "blocks"—smaller geographical units containing an average of 30 housing units—into demographic groups known as "strata." Next, it would conduct an extremely detailed recount in a random sample of blocks from each stratum.

Comparing the results of the initial count and the sample recount—just like comparing the counts of fish in the hypothetical lake—should make it possible to estimate the number of people who were not counted in the first go-round and to adjust the results accordingly. The bureau estimates that a count using this methodology would be accurate to within 0.1 percent at the national level, 0.5 percent at the state level, 0.6 percent at the congressional district level, and 1.1 percent at the census tract level. By contrast, the projected error for a traditional count—attempting to reach all households without using sampling—is 1.9 percent. The bureau believes that no amount of money spent on a traditional count is likely to produce better results. The nonpartisan National Research Council agrees, calling sampling "key to the successful conduct of an affordable enumeration of adequate quality in all parts of the country."

There is one key difference between the new plan and the one Mosbacher rejected seven years ago. If the bureau gets its way, only a single set of numbers will be produced, rather than a set of unadjusted numbers and a set of adjusted numbers from which the commerce secretary can choose. That's why Republicans are trying to stop sampling now.

But their objections are difficult to take seriously. The GOP's first argument hinges on the fact that the Constitution refers to an "actual enumeration"—a phrase that Republicans take to mean a traditional head count. But why is a head count, which everyone admits is not without error, any more "actual" than a count based on sampling? In fact, both methods are really just estimates. The fundamental issue is accuracy—and the experts seem to think sampling is more accurate. Why would the Founders have wanted to keep future generations from conducting the most accurate count possible?

In fact, the words "actual enumeration" don't support the weight that Republicans are placing on them. Article I of the Constitution provides that "Representatives ... shall be apportioned among the several States ... according to their respective Numbers," and that "[t]he actual Enumeration shall be made ... in such Manner as [Congress] shall by Law direct." Thus, the words "actual enumeration" don't limit Congress's power to determine the manner of counting. The only constraint is that apportionment must be based on population "numbers."

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The Republicans' second argument against sampling is even more absurd. During the debates last year, House members repeatedly charged that the bureau was planning to count 90 percent of the population and guess the rest. Obviously, in one sense, an estimate based on sampling is only a guess. But it is a guess based on scientific methodology, and, again, the weight of professional opinion suggests that it is a more accurate guess than a traditional head count.

Finally, the Republicans claim that anything but a traditional head count would be open to political manipulation. But if the idea is to keep the census above politics—as it ought to be—then it is the Republicans who are in the wrong on this issue. Prior to 1929, Congress exercised direct control over apportionment; every ten years, members would tinker with the formulas. These machinations frequently resulted in inequitable apportionments, and in one case even affected the outcome of a presidential race. In 1876, Democrat Samuel J. Tilden won a majority of the popular vote, but he lost to Republican Rutherford B. Hayes by one vote in the electoral college. Proper apportionment would have shifted the election to Tilden.

This system suffered a complete breakdown in the wake of the 1920 census, which revealed vast shifts in population from rural states to urban ones. Faced with the unpleasant task of reshaping itself to reflect the nation's new demography, Congress balked. It failed to pass a reapportionment bill, and the apportionment based on the 1910 census remained in effect throughout the 1920s, in open violation of the Constitution.

In 1929, Congress made reapportionment automatic and delegated its authority over the census to the commerce secretary and the census director. For the most part, this system has functioned smoothly, and Congress has not attempted to retake control of the process. If Republicans succeed in blocking sampling, however, they would be paving the way for a return to the pre-1929 era.

The current system, of course, is not perfect. It places far too much control over the census in the hands of the commerce secretary. Recent secretaries have hardly been above the political fray. The current secretary, William Daley, is the son of the Chicago mayor who ran the country's most notorious Democratic machine and the brother of Chicago's current mayor. Clinton's first commerce secretary, Ron Brown, former chairman of the Democratic National Committee, was a master fundraiser. Mosbacher was a wealthy Republican donor who resigned as secretary to serve as the general chairman of President Bush's 1992 campaign.

Given this history of appointments, Congress would certainly be wise to place more discretion in the hands of the bureau and zealously guard that agency's nonpartisan status. Sadly, however, Riche's departure suggests that House Republicans are proceeding busily down the opposite road.

MATTHEW M. HOFFMAN is an attorney living in Washington, D.C.

CHICAGO POSTCARD

TRUE BLUES

By Jonathan Eig

You drive down a block filled with abandoned taco stands, abandoned liquor stores, and abandoned beauty salons. To the casual visitor, it would appear that not one business has survived the blight. But as you walk past an old video store—its windows papered to fit the neighborhood's theme of forsakenness—you hear the faint thumping of a bass guitar, the chattering clatter of drums, and the high-pitched wail of a well-blown harmonica.

It's a cold and rainy Sunday night, and this unnamed blues club on Chicago's West Side is open for business. You pull open the door and step into a small, ramshackle bar filled with 40 people and their shared cloud of cigarette smoke. At the far end of the room, Tail Dragger and the Lazy Boys are rattling the mirrors with a searing brand of Arkansas-meets-Chicago blues.

Hard rocks is my pillow
Cold ground is my bed
The highway is my home
And I might as well be dead

The bar is so small that, when Tail Dragger drops to his knees and shuffles along the muddy-gray carpet, singing about his unanswered prayers, he disappears into a cluster of patrons on bar stools. Tail Dragger says this is his favorite place to play; here, he says, he can tell a story with his songs, and he knows the audience of Southern transplants will understand. "Go on, Tail Dragger, go on," they shout, as the band romps through its chord changes.

But sadly, this is also one of the few places Tail Dragger can still play. While the blues are thriving in Chicago—more than 45 clubs now offer live acts at least once a week—the music and the musicians aren't faring nearly as well. Bands like Tail Dragger's don't get the big gigs because they won't cater to the tourists and suburbanites in search of the North Side's polished, upbeat fare. And while Tail Dragger's band has plenty of talent, it has one serious liability: although Tail Dragger is black, all four of his Lazy Boys are white. And that's not what the North Side's white audiences are paying to hear.

It wasn't always this way. Before the blues became a tourist attraction, bands like Tail Dragger's had their choice of more than a dozen South Side and West Side clubs in which to perform. They were dingy and smoky,

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and they were plentiful. Now, most blues clubs are tourist-oriented venues with valet parking, tacky souvenirs, and clean toilets—places you'd be comfortable bringing your boss or even your mother-in-law.

With a heavily hyped *Blues Brothers* sequel due out in February, the trend will almost certainly continue. Last year, enormous crowds met the opening of the House of Blues, which looks like an opera house for beer drinkers. A blues hotel—whatever that means—is slated to open next door this year. Two blues clubs are already crowded into the trendy neighborhood that is home to the Rainforest Cafe, Planet Hollywood, and the Hard Rock Cafe. A blues T-shirt and poster store is preparing to set up in the same area this year. And, up the block, a Minneapolis-based chain has begun construction on an 800-seat restaurant and blues bar. The owner of the blues club across the street isn't worried about competition because the demand for the music seems limitless these days.

Or at least it is for certain types of music. At 57, Tail Dragger, whose real name is James Y. Jones, has been singing professionally for half of his life. He's also been invited to blues festivals all over Europe. Yet most nights he earns just $65 or so, plus tips. He sings in a rich voice, between a tenor and a bass, and he delivers lyrics with a rugged emotion that gives even tough men goose bumps. But he still works full-time as a diesel mechanic. Playing Chicago just won't pay the rent.

Tail Dragger's band plays a brand of blues that hasn't changed since he first heard it on the radio 50 years ago in his native Arkansas. His sound, filled with raw sexuality and a homesickness for the South, descends from the plugged-in country blues of Muddy Waters and Howlin' Wolf. "You don't hear too much real blues around no more," he says, chatting between sets at a table near the back of the bar. He's tall and powerfully built, wearing a handsome gray suit and a black Stetson hat. A gold-capped tooth flashes when he smiles through his graying beard. "A lot of people are going to the North Side to hear the jump-up blues [a more raucous blend of blues, rock, and pop]. They see black people playing, so they think it's the blues. But they don't put no feeling in the jump-up blues. If you came down here playing that stuff, these people would run you out."

Behind the music, Tail Dragger has a résumé of hard work and adversity—he served a 17-month prison term for second-degree murder. (He shot a blues man who he claimed was threatening him.) In contrast, most of his band members are from the suburbs. One sells chemicals for a living. This, too, reflects the marketplace. The black players get offers to start their own bands, slick up their sound, and play the North Side—where the money is better and producers are more likely to catch their acts. White musicians, meanwhile, have a hard time getting gigs on the North Side—so they end up playing for black crowds such as this one.

To be fair, there are many fine musicians playing the North Side, and it is the support of suburbanites and tourists which makes Chicago's blues scene the world's most robust. Buddy Guy, perhaps the city's biggest star, has a club of his own. Magic Slim and the Teardrops, Eddy Clearwater, Melvin Taylor, Otis Rush, Otis Clay, Big Daddy Kinsey, and Pinetop Perkins can all be heard most every week. "The out-of-towners have really kept the blues alive," says Gino Battaglia, who owns two clubs called Blue Chicago and markets blues paraphernalia around the world. He estimates that half of his customers are tourists. "Thirty million people come to Chicago on business every year," he says, "and they have to go somewhere at night.... Michael Jordan and the blues: those are two things that really define the city for visitors."

But the clubs give the novice audiences what they want, even if it's not always what the musicians want to play. When Battaglia finds a band he likes, he hires them only on the condition that they use one of his female singers to lead the outfit. At most North Side venues, the bands usually play on stages, above and apart from the crowd. And they often play the same songs night after night, featuring most of the hits made famous by the Blues Brothers. Band leaders play fast and loud, sometimes plucking guitar strings with their tongues, striving for a sound closer to Jimi Hendrix than B. B. King.

One recent night at a popular North Side club called B.L.U.E.S. (the initials don't stand for anything), a group of sales reps smoke burrito-sized cigars and chat on their cellular phones as they crowd around the stage to hear Big Time Sarah and the BTS Express. B.L.U.E.S. offers fine wine by the bottle or glass; the club, which charges $8 at the door, also sells B.L.U.E.S. T-shirts, boxer shorts, and lingerie. Big Time Sarah sings mostly about her gloriously large body and the many difficult-to-imagine sexual acts she performs with it. She thrills the sales reps by inviting them to sing along on stage. Twice during her act, she allows members of the audience to smother themselves in her bosom. "We ought to invite her to our next sales meeting," one of the reps exclaims to his buddies.

This vaudeville act, almost completely devoid of musical meaning, attracts a strong following. Big Time Sarah appears several nights a week at the city's top clubs, but, if you've seen her act more than once, you've seen enough. The songs and jokes are the same from one night to the next. The music, removed from its urban cradle, has already lost some of the sweet and sweaty force that made it great.

On the West Side, meanwhile, Tail Dragger's joint has no stage and no spotlight. A pool table is pushed aside so that the band can play. Tail Dragger sometimes sings from his favorite bar stool like just another drinking man in a long line. And he sings the songs that mean the most to him, improvising lyrics to reflect his own experience. The audience doesn't applaud so much as chide, chat, and laugh with him. The economy may no longer support a club in this neighborhood, but here, at least, the music is alive.

JONATHAN EIG is a senior editor at *Chicago* magazine and a regular contributor to *Down Beat*.

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John Paul v. modernity.

OLD FAITHFUL

By Michael Sean Winters

In a country accustomed to one message and one messenger, the Pope's visit to Cuba is the stuff of high political drama, certainly a more provocative threat to Castro's regime than the Helms-Burton Act. For weeks now, the U.S. press has been buzzing with speculation as to whether the Pope may precipitate the fall of communism in Cuba—finally succeeding where generations of U.S. policymakers have failed. After all, as *Newsweek* cheerfully notes, "this well-traveled Pope has crusaded with fervor against his old Communist foes."

But make no mistake: while the Pope is happy to praise democracy, he is no champion of capitalist values out to slay the last defender of Marxism. In fact, as Castro has gleefully observed, the Pope "has done all his criticisms of communism. Now he's criticizing capitalism." That's because John Paul is guided by a theological vision that is as hostile to capitalism as it is to communism. And while some high-profile neoconservative Catholics are content to celebrate the collapse of communism—and bask in the capitalist afterglow—John Paul is already retrofitting the arguments he used against Marxism and the Marxist-tinged liberation theologians of the 1970s for use against advocates of U.S.–style capitalism during the 1990s.

DRAWING BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

Though always more popular on U.S. campuses than in the barrios of Latin America, liberation theology was an ideological threat to John Paul's Christian vision. It borrowed heavily from Marxism in an attempt to equate the Christian gospels with the socioeconomic struggles of the poor. But John Paul's objection to the movement was never based on economic or geostrategic considerations. (The Catholic Church can live with shoddy economics and confused politics—the Vatican, after all, is in Italy.) Rather, John Paul argued that the "liberation" promised by liberation theology was inadequate because its conception of the human person was too limited. Marxism reduced the human person to a *homo economicus*. So, as Monsignor Lorenzo Albacete, a key theological ally of John Paul's in the attack on liberation theology, puts it: "What do we say to a man who is dying? That he should place his hope in the end of economic exploitation? When the Church ceases to be concerned with eternity, it ceases to be the Church."

To the Pope, the capitalist, consumerist ethic of the West is just as unsatisfactory an alternative, since it also entails a reduction of the human person to its economic dimension. Thus, John Paul and his followers within the Church view capitalism's cold war victory over Marxism with ambivalence. They're glad to be rid of an alarming threat to Catholic principles, but unenthusiastic about the strengthening of what they perceive as a different—but equally serious—menace.

At a synod of bishops from North and South America held in Rome last autumn, a prevailing theme was anxiety over the extension of U.S.–style capitalism into the traditionally Catholic cultures of Latin America. Some bishops even used the term "invasion." While praising the restoration of democracy throughout Latin America and acknowledging the free market's ability to break up the often corrupt oligarchies that dominate many Latin American economies, the bishops expressed dismay at capitalism's general disregard for individual suffering in the name of overall economic progress. They condemned economic models that ignore the needs of the poor. (After all, it's as

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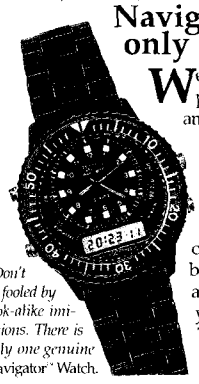

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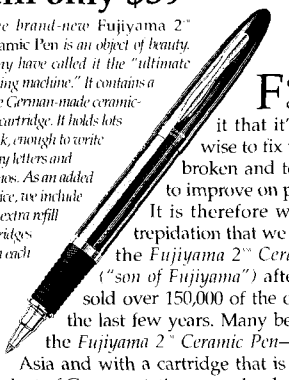

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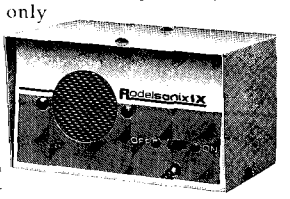

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dehumanizing to reduce a poor person to a mere statistic in an IMF austerity program as it is to lump him into the ranks of the faceless proletariat.) And most of the Latin American bishops at the synod endorsed John Paul's call for a severe reduction—if not outright cancellation—of the debt burden of poor developing countries.

The bishops' concern for the human impact of free-market policies also shapes their pronouncements in the United States. Recently, in both St. Louis and Los Angeles, the local bishops strongly opposed the selling of Catholic hospitals to for-profit conglomerates. As Roger Cardinal Mahony of Los Angeles explained, "the primary goal of health care delivery is not to generate a profit for shareholders; rather, it is a public asset to be directed toward the common good of the society." Bernard Cardinal Law of Boston was even more blunt: "Business considerations should not take precedence over mission." This may seem a naïve and ultimately unworkable position, but as Archbishop Daniel Pilarczyk of Cincinnati explains: "We are pastors. We ask, 'How does this affect the poor?' Whatever the economic presuppositions, this is a question we can't stop asking."

Despite its economic implications, John Paul and his bishops' critique of U.S. capitalism is fundamentally centered on cultural concerns. Specifically, the Pope worries about the free market's power to break familial and social bonds that may not be profitable but are nonetheless humane. In a recent statement, U.S. bishops pronounced this withering critique of modern culture:

> In our country, the modern, technological, functional mentality creates a world of replaceable individuals incapable of authentic solidarity. In its place, society is grouped by artificial arrangements created by powerful interests. The common ground is an increasingly dull, sterile consumer conformism, so visible especially among too many of our young people, created by artificial needs promoted by the advertising media to support powerful economic interests.

How to rescue mankind from this bleak new world? A recurrent theme of John Paul's writings is the need for a new humanism to serve as the foundation of a new postmodern culture. This new humanism should not be confused with the humanism of post-Enlightenment philosophy. In fact, to John Paul, it is precisely the rationalist approach that is at the heart of the problem. For the "technological, functional" mentality he decries is rooted not just in capitalist or Marxist materialism, but in all modern, post-Enlightenment thought. The culprit here is not Karl Marx or Adam Smith but René Descartes! In short, the Pope's visit to Cuba is part not of a battle against communism but of a lifelong crusade against modernity itself. And that's a good deal more challenging than confronting Fidel Castro.

MICHAEL SEAN WINTERS is a doctoral student in Church History at the Catholic University of America.

Can the Pope save Cuba?

PILGRIM'S PROMISE

By Anna Husarska

HAVANA

"There are only two ways that Cuba's economy may be saved—one possible, the other unlikely," goes a popular joke here. "The Virgin of the Charity of el Cobre could come down from the heavens to intervene—that's the more realistic scenario—or Cuba's socialist experiment could end up succeeding—that would take a miracle."

Many a truth is told in jest, and a miracle or two would certainly come in handy on this island. Perhaps that's why the townspeople of Pinar del Río went to such lengths to welcome Pope John Paul II. Although its famed tobacco plantations make a visit to this little town to the west of Havana a must for cigar connoisseurs, Pinar del Río was not initially included on the Pope's itinerary. Undaunted, the local bishop, José Siro González, proposed a novel way to get his flock in on the action: Why not have the Pope's plane enter Cuban airspace by flying *above* the town? That way, Pinar del Río would be the first diocese to greet the Pope.

A daring but euphoric signature-gathering campaign ensued. Even the local Communist Party leaders got involved, and a thick book with thousands of requests was soon forwarded to Rome. The Vatican was happy to comply, and it instructed Alitalia to change the pontiff's flight path so he could approach Cuba from the right direction. Delighted, the residents of Pinar del Río prepared huge hand-painted welcome banners and arranged to stand outdoors and use little mirrors to shine reflected sunbeams toward the plane carrying His Holiness.

The sunbeam committee was organized by Dagoberto Valdés, a lay Catholic activist. I met Dagoberto because he is the editor of *Vitral*, a bimonthly social and cultural magazine published by the local diocese, and I had come to Cuba in search of Cuban Catholic texts to translate for publication in Poland. Although I was not on a journalistic visit, my stay afforded me ample opportunity to observe the preparations that he and his fellow Catholics across Cuba were making in anticipation of the Pope's visit.

Their obvious enthusiasm inevitably called to mind the heady days of June 1979, when Karol Wojtyla, then only recently elected Pope John Paul II, returned to his (and my) homeland for the first papal pilgrimage to a Communist-ruled country. That visit changed Poland forever. The huge crowds that came to greet the Pope

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were the first spontaneous gatherings in Communist Poland. And their immense numbers gave those who had come together an unprecedented sense of self-confidence. The climate of fear that had gripped Poland for so long suddenly evaporated, creating an atmosphere that was more conducive to change. Within a year the "Solidarity" trade union was born. And ten years later the totalitarian regime was replaced with a democratic system.

There are of course many more differences than similarities between the 1979 papal visit to Poland and this year's visit to Cuba. The Pope is a lot older, and his energy level and degree of familiarity with the nation hosting him are much lower this time. And, in contrast to the Soviet-backed Communist apparatchiks who ruled Poland in 1979, the man who runs Cuba came to power in a revolution and has never faced an internal revolt strong enough to seriously threaten his rule. Whereas the Polish opposition of 1979 was an experienced, united group that reached out to workers and peasants, the dissident movement in Cuba is still politically divided and is limited to intellectual elites.

PHOTOGRAPH BY ANNA HUSARSKA FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

Most significantly, the Cuban church has never enjoyed the national stature of its Polish counterpart. True, roughly 40 percent of Cubans are baptized, and according to Vatican sources the number of Cuban children attending catechism classes has quintupled over the past few years. But the practice of religion is still very limited: churches fill up only on Sundays and major holidays. As a result, the Cuban clergy makes for a rather small group: there are only 240 Cuban priests on the island, and they tend to be wary of provoking the government's wrath, sticking to pastoral work instead.

Nonetheless, as with the Polish church of 1979, the Cuban church remains the only other structured, national institution aside from the Communist Party. Perhaps not surprisingly then, its relationship with the revolutionary government has been troubled. Things started out amicably enough in January 1959, when Cuban church leaders issued a pastoral letter saluting the "triumphal entry" into Havana of Fidel Castro and his companions. By May 1960, however, the tone had changed, and church leaders felt "obliged to recommend and indeed instruct diocesans (and, if necessary, all Cubans) to refuse to cooperate in any way with communism." Half a year later the bishops complained to Castro that there was "an anti-religious campaign of national dimension, growing more virulent by the day." Relations were not improved when a number of priests chose to participate in the failed April 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion. Castro retaliated by expelling 130 priests from Cuba; 400 more chose exile, as did 2,000 monks and nuns. The state security police also detained two bishops for several days, and four priests were jailed for two years for serving as "chaplains of the counterrevolutionaries." Repression of the church peaked during the mid-1960s when the current archbishop of Havana, Cardinal Jaime Ortega, and auxiliary Bishop Alfredo Petit were sent to forced labor in the "Military Units of Production Support"—Cuba's version of the Gulag.

The anti-religious campaign was to have long-lasting consequences. Anyone with any religious beliefs was barred from government employment, and young people from practicing Christian families were not admitted to the university. Although social studies, literature, journalism, and law were therefore off-limits to the practicing Catholics, some technical faculties were less restrictive—hence, the disproportionate number of Catholics among Cuban architects and engineers.

Relations between the church and the state began to improve by the mid-1970s. In 1975, the Cuban Communist Party declared that every citizen had the right to decide whether or not to be religious. Ten years later, perhaps inspired by the marriage of Nicaraguan Sandinistas and liberation theologians (or perhaps in a bout of nostalgia for his own education with the Jesuits), Castro discussed his relationship with religion in a series of interviews, which later became the book *Fidel and Religion*. "We never required that every man be an atheist," Fidel explained to Brazilian priest Frei Betto. "The revolution is not an anti-religious proposition."

A series of mutually conciliatory steps soon followed. In 1985, Castro met with Cuban bishops. A year later, the Cuban church held a national meeting to explore "what socialism can bring to religious faith." Finally, in 1991, the Communist Party allowed believers into its ranks, and, not long after—hallelujah!—the state was officially declared to be secular (instead of atheist). This had the immediate effect of increasing church attendance. Father Nelson of the Sagrada Corazón Church in Central Havana has observed a marked change: "In my

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parish there are now a few party members who would not have dared to come to mass before 1991."

The government's new tolerance is not the only reason for the surge in church attendance. Eighty-year-old Rafael Cepeda, dean of the Evangelical Institute of Biblical and Theological Studies (an unofficial yet tolerated study center), offers another explanation: "It all started with the fall of the Berlin Wall. The Cubans were stunned, they felt that the earth moved under their feet, and they experienced a disconcerting spiritual void. They felt like ideological orphans, so they flocked to the church, or rather to the churches, because in the evangelical church we also saw our congregation grow."

The Cuban government's rapprochement with the church was sealed in November 1996, when Castro traveled to Rome for his historic tête-à-tête with John Paul. The Papal pilgrimage to Cuba was announced shortly afterward (although preparations for it had been going on much earlier). Castro would not have invited the Pope had he not believed it to be in his own best interest. But he also moved quickly to try to prevent the Pope's visit from turning into a replay of Poland in 1979. Calling on all Cubans to welcome the pontiff with open arms, Castro ensured that the impact of any mass outpouring of affection for—or curiosity about—the pontiff would be neutralized. Now, no one could be sure how many of those who gathered to greet the Pope had come spontaneously and how many were following orders.

Nonetheless, there can be little doubt that the Pope has aroused genuine sympathy. Outside private houses all over Havana, people put up posters welcoming "The Messenger of Truth and Hope." At first, these houses tended to come in clusters, as if each resident had infected his neighbor with the courage to display such a defiant credo. The church groups also distributed Pope buttons. I obtained one from the Cuban office of Caritas (a Catholic humanitarian society that is the only nongovernmental organization authorized to operate in Cuba) and pinned the button on my T-shirt. It brought me a lot of friendly smiles, a ten percent price reduction on a collection of 1950s American film posters from an antique shop, and many inquiries as to where one could find more buttons.

Another bit of Pope paraphernalia in high demand was, ironically, the Communist Party's newspaper *Granma*. Crammed with endless pages of official speeches, complete with mentions of "applause" and "laughter," the party organ is not usually a hot item. But the paper made its black-market debut when it featured an address from His Holiness to the Cuban people that took up two-thirds of the front page in its December 20, 1997, issue. Copies of the issue were said to have fetched up to $10—a hundred times its nominal price and the equivalent of an average monthly salary here.

But ultimately it was not the outward manifestations of support for the Pope that make his visit significant. Rather, it was the way in which his presence spurred local communities to organize themselves independently of the government. A group of local Havana parishioners passing out informational leaflets listing, for example, the precise gathering points for groups wishing to welcome the Pope were engaging in what was probably their first spontaneous community activity since the revolution.

The importance of these activities lies not so much in their immediate impact as in the mood that they inspire. As Dagoberto said of his fellow mirror-carrying citizens in Pinar del Río, "We need to do things, to do them together." Thus, in the long run, apart from its pastoral dimension, the Pope's visit may end up serving to mobilize people, to help them shake off their inertia, and act as an independent community, even if they are starting with only small things. The crucial question is whether the Pope will indeed manage to provoke such lasting changes in the hearts and minds of Cubans. How much courage, self-reliance, and solidarity will he inspire? How will he and his visit reinforce or rather reconstruct civil society on the island? It is in this sense that the miracle that happened with the Holy Father's 1979 visit to Poland may repeat itself in Cuba, although on a smaller scale: it may plant the seeds for an open-minded civil society. (Karol Wojtyla as the prophet of Karl Popper? Why not? If anyone can do it, this Pope can.) A strong civil society is the sine qua non for a peaceful transition in Cuba. It is a transition that the 77-year-old Pope fears may come too late for him, and that the 71-year-old *comandante* fears may come too early for him. But they both know that it will come.

ANNA HUSARSKA'S TRAVEL TO HAVANA WAS BACKED BY THE CRACOW-BASED CATHOLIC PUBLISHER "TYGODNIK POWSZECHNY."

The deficit's gone. So what?

MONEY FOR NOTHING

By Sean Wilentz

It's budget surplus time in Washington, and some of the locals are heralding the dawn of a new political era. History suggests that they should simmer down—and maybe even worry a bit. In the past, elation over balancing the federal government's books has quickly given way to acrimony about what to do with the anticipated surplus. And, as the pols and bankers of Andrew Jackson's generation learned, the outcomes of these debates can be disastrous.

In December 1833, President Jackson announced in

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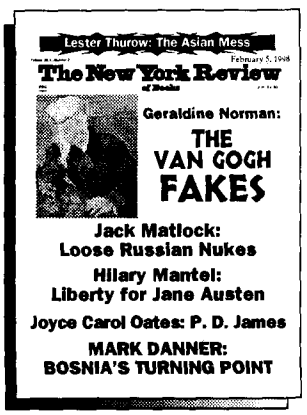
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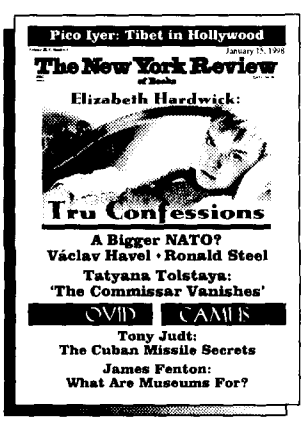
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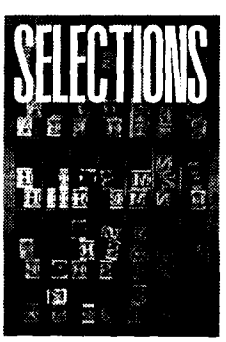

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his Annual Message to Congress that, thanks to his administration's prudent fiscal management, the treasury was on the brink of paying off the national debt. (Not just of ending federal deficits, mind you, but of retiring the entire debt. Then again, Jackson's immediate predecessors hadn't tried to cut revenues and increase defense spending at the same time.) "The rare blessing of a revenue sufficiently abundant," Jackson proclaimed, would now be handed over to the citizenry, "unencumbered with any burdens but what they themselves shall think proper to impose on it." Yet, amid the rejoicing, there was sharp disagreement over what the Whig-dominated Congress should do with the "rare blessing." Hand it over to the states, as many Whigs wanted? Spend it, as other congressmen demanded? Let it pile up, to no particular purpose?

As it happened, Congress overcame Jackson's misgivings and distributed the extra revenues to the states. The distributed surplus fueled an already overheated speculative economy. In 1837, the bubble finally burst, and the banks collapsed. A five-year depression ensued.

There are, of course, important differences between then and now. The projected Clinton surpluses are so small that they are unlikely to do much ill or much good to the economy. And the ideological context of fiscal politics has changed utterly. During the 1830s, when liberals fretted over federal subsidies to the overprivileged classes, Jacksonian Democrats looked forward to a future of fiscal restraint. ("The flourishing state of the finances ought not to encourage us to indulge in a lavish expenditure of the public treasury," Jackson warned Congress.) Today, with liberals fretting over diminished federal subsidies to the underprivileged classes, many Democrats are laying claim to the surplus as a source of more federal spending.

Former Labor Secretary Robert Reich, for example, suggests giving the money to Americans "who have not shared in the huge surge in wealth" of the 1990s: he recommends tax credits, wage subsidies, federal aid to education, and cash payments to poverty-stricken high-school graduates. ("Give me more money, and I'll find more uses," Reich writes.) Other commentators seem smitten by the notion that, at long last, Democrats needn't worry about being bludgeoned by anti-deficit rhetoric and can go back to what liberals do best—spending money.

Of course, the skeptics—including former Congressional Budget Office Director Robert Reischauer and former Chair of the Council of Economic Advisers Laura D'Andrea Tyson—caution that the projected surpluses are so small and uncertain that, as Tyson puts it, "relatively minor changes in underlying economic conditions could cause them to disappear altogether." Meanwhile, conservatives and Republicans appear to be genuinely worried about the prospect of a balanced budget, if only because deficit-bashing has proven such a useful conservative political tool in recent years. George Will blusters that the deficit has by no means ended and that the surplus projections are merely bits of statistical hocus-pocus cooked up by the (secretly liberal) Clinton administration. *The Wall Street Journal*'s Paul Gigot fears the surplus will provide excellent cover for Clinton's newly announced plans to expand Medicare and support child care while paralyzing Republicans. William Kristol has wished aloud that some minor disaster might strike the nation and eat up whatever surplus arises—thereby keeping up the pressure for Republican-style austerity.

What all of these people agree on, though, is that, at least symbolically, the end of the deficit is a boon to big-government liberalism—and that liberals, having paid their dues during the lean deficit-ridden years dating back to the late 1960s, will henceforth be freer to act like themselves again. But the great challenges facing liberals today may have less to do with spending tax dollars than they do with updating legal and institutional arrangements that have become obsolete. This, in turn, requires overcoming political obstacles that are still every bit as challenging as they were a few years ago. As long as liberals lose sight of this—and so long as we accept our adversaries' definition of us as knee-jerk tax-and-spenders, or as mere subsidizers of the less fortunate—we will misread our political heritage, undercut our political position, and limit our political imagination.

Somehow, since 1969—the last time the federal government ran a surplus—the impression has grown that the essence of modern liberalism (that is, liberalism since the New Deal) is massive social spending. The impression is false. Social spending by New Dealers was mainly on emergency programs designed to put people to work on needed social projects. The much-maligned social spending by the Great Society actually amounted to quite a modest portion of Lyndon Johnson's budgets (although that also had something to do with the huge expenditures on Vietnam).

Indeed, the truly innovative and enduring aspect of modern American liberalism has been its ability to intercede on behalf of the less powerful in other ways—to help them, individually and collectively, to improve their lot for themselves. The National Labor Relations Act and the Social Security Act—these are the permanent monuments of the New Deal, not the Works Progress Administration or the Civilian Conservation Corps. The impact of Lyndon Johnson's Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Voting Rights Act of 1965 has far outlasted the community assistance programs and the Job Corps. Liberalism, at its most robust, has stood not for subsidizing select portions of the nation's population. Rather, it has acknowledged (as Andrew Jackson once put it) that "the rich and powerful too often bend the acts of government to their selfish purposes"—and tried to keep them from doing so.

Unfortunately, some of the old liberal protections for ordinary Americans have become outmoded and even counterproductive amid the startling economic and

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social changes of the past 30 years. Take for example the nation's labor laws, which ought always to be a liberal priority. The current rules of union recognition and collective bargaining, in place since the 1930s and 1940s, are geared to a scientifically managed, heavy-industrial American economy—that is, an economy that has long been in eclipse. Those rules assume that nearly every worker has a long-term, full-time job with a single employer. As a result, many important social benefits that are available through employers—including health insurance, tuition reimbursement programs, and child care—are available only to full-time employees.

In today's workforce, however, millions of workers—currently one-quarter of the total and rising—work on a part-time, leased, on-call, subcontracted, or otherwise contingent basis. Most of these workers (a disproportionate number of whom are women) hold low-paying service jobs with few, if any, fringe benefits. Nearly everyone agrees that unionizing this new sector of the workforce would do wonders for wages and working conditions. Unfortunately, the existing labor laws are more of a hindrance than a help. Elaborate and burdensome election procedures, in keeping with legal requirements that unions demonstrate support from the majority of workers in a particular site, make organizing unduly difficult. Under current laws, persons employed in home-based occupations—including housecleaning, word processing, and telemarketing—face insuperable obstacles to securing union recognition. Millions of other workers, meanwhile, lack legal protection for organizing efforts. Domestic workers, agricultural workers, supervisors, managers (defined as virtually anyone with even the slightest managerial duties), and public sector employees are explicitly excluded under the old laws; subsequently, the courts have also excluded independent contractors, confidential employees, and a grab bag of others.

Some of these deficiencies, especially with regard to public sector workers and agricultural workers, have been repaired in some states. Still, nearly one-third of all private sector workers fall outside the protections of the labor laws, and only about one-half of the states have extended collective bargaining rights to their public employees. Finally, even the millions of workers who are technically covered by the labor laws are effectively denied protection. Employers fire workers for concerted—and, in principle, protected—union activity every day, with impunity. And, in the new economy, where the growth of corporate conglomerates and the spread of subcontracting have blurred the distinction between "primary" and "secondary" employers, workers who in effect work for the same organization are barred from acting in concert by current prohibitions on so-called "secondary" strikes and boycotts.

Adjusting labor relations to fit current economic realities would not involve any great expenditure of public monies. But it would involve taking on powerful political foes, such as the Chamber of Commerce and the National Association of Manufacturers. And that's why the talk of the surplus resurrecting liberalism is so misleading. Yes, lack of money has hampered liberalism in the last 20 years. But an equally significant (and, in some cases, more significant) impediment has been the lack of political will. On a host of similar issues—like campaign finance reform and health care regulation, to name just two—the question is not whether liberals can spend enough government money, but whether the case for activist government is strong enough to overcome opposition from Republicans, conservative Democrats, and their kindred interest groups. Liberals still have to make that argument. Getting giddy about the surplus isn't the way to do it. •

What the new Clintonism really means.

REACTIVATED

By Jonathan Chait

Last year ended with the Clinton administration mired in ideological retrogression. While the White House had successfully beaten back the Republican revolution, it still defined its own political agenda by the conservative criteria of tax cutting and balanced budgets. President Clinton won a few progressive accomplishments, but he won them mainly by cloaking his proposals in Republican garb—education spending masquerading as tax cuts—and by ceding even more ground to the GOP. Maybe the Republicans were no longer running wild through the Capitol as they did following the 1994 elections, but they had good reason to believe that the tectonic plates of history were grinding inexorably rightward.

Suddenly, and without obvious external prompting, all that seems to have changed. Clinton has seized the

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policy initiative in the last month with a blizzard of small– to medium–sized new proposals. To be sure, nothing in the new package rivals the sweeping reform attempts of Clinton's first two years. But, given that Republicans control both houses of Congress, the White House has drawn up a remarkably ambitious agenda.

The hefty list—you may want to skim this part—includes: subsidies to train computer workers; tougher food inspection; more funding for AIDS drugs; expanding the Peace Corps; increasing funds for work-study programs; billions of dollars in new tax and spending programs to encourage child care; opening Medicare to younger retirees; doubling federal medical-research spending; restoring food stamps to legal immigrants; enrolling more children in Medicaid; increasing aid to the homeless; repairing dilapidated schools; and boosting the tax credit for investing in low-income housing. And, Clinton aides promise, there is more to come.

White House advisers are of course loathe to concede that the new proposals deviate in even the slightest way from the cautious centrism that won them re-election. (And who could blame them for trying to head off accusations of woolly-minded big-government McGovernism?) But make no mistake: Clinton's new program represents a renewal of liberal activist government after three years of legislative ennui. It is a sea change—a third Clinton term, as *Washington Post* columnist E.J. Dionne put it. And while all this may yet be derailed by scandal, the impact has gone beyond Clinton's presidency. The very nature of the political climate has changed. Washington is no longer arguing about how much to cut government. Instead, it is debating the possibility of new functions for government.

This is, one might suppose, the perfect terrain for a conservative counteroffensive. After all, the public might not have wanted to slash government all at once, but haven't both parties reminded us that the lesson of the 1994 election is that the era of big government is over? Clinton, having moved from the safe ground of defending the status quo to the riskier position of proposing new ideas, would appear vulnerable to the same conservative attacks that so chastened him in the past. You can almost hear Rush Limbaugh rifling through his Rolodex of Republican honchos.

Yet the startling thing about this turn of fortune is that, at least for the moment, Republicans appear helpless in the face of Clinton's new policy onslaught. A memo by Christina Martin, House Speaker Newt Gingrich's press secretary, encapsulates the GOP's paralysis. Martin's memo warns her fellow House Republican press secretaries not to attack Clinton's initiatives. "Don't take the bait," it reads. "The White House is setting up straw men on popular issues, hoping to draw us into bloody fights, so they can demagogue that we are 'against' the environment, the elderly, the poor, the sick, and the young." Martin's memo is a white flag, a frank concession that Republicans cannot stop Clinton.

This is not, keep in mind, a mere replay of the Republican capitulation after the government shutdowns of 1995 and 1996. While the GOP has previously been stymied in its efforts to advance its own proposals for spending cuts and reduced regulation, it has also consistently been able to thwart Clinton's agenda. Even when Democrats controlled Congress, Republicans annihilated Clinton's health care reform and turned public opinion against his crime bill and the 1993 budget. During the health care debate, a famous memo by GOP strategist William Kristol urged the party to oppose any health reform "sight unseen." Kristol's memo served as a testament of political strength, reflecting the party's conviction that it could win any fight against Clinton, regardless of specifics. Now, in Martin's memo, the GOP has produced Kristol's antithesis.

Clinton's offensive and the Republicans' impotence did not materialize overnight—and, in a way, it was not White House initiative that sparked the change. Indeed, the turnabout traces back to early 1996, when Republican Senator Nancy Kassebaum and Democrat Ted Kennedy cosponsored a bill to allow people who lost or changed their jobs to keep their health insurance. The Republican leadership tried to bottle up the measure, but they found to their dismay that the public supported it. Even proponents had to admit the proposal was modest, and, after calculating that opposing it was not worth sustaining more political damage, Congress relented and passed it into law.

Later that spring, Kennedy introduced another measure to boost the minimum wage. This was a far more bitter pill than insurance portability. It struck at the heart of conservative economic theory. Republicans stood dead-set against it, but, as their approval ratings withered through the summer, party moderates steadily defected until the leadership at last had no choice but to relent. The successful passage of these two measures immediately boosted Congress's approval rating. Many Republicans believe that this nudge allowed them to maintain their majority.

This episode taught Republicans an important lesson: no matter how much they despised certain policy ideals, they could not afford to oppose such measures. Republicans have since begun recognizing such ideas—they have recently taken the lead in offering new regulations for HMOs. The fear of resisting popular liberal reforms has been ingrained into the GOP's psyche. "The lesson of 1996," says a Republican leadership aide, "is that the public rewards cooperative endeavors."

The GOP's propensity to surrender is compounded by a basic strategic weakness. Republicans have girded for battle against the large, bulky variety of liberalism, rather than the diffuse cluster of microinitiatives that Clinton has perfected. They have attacked the means of liberalism—taxes, bureaucracy—without attacking its ends. In 1994, for instance, Republicans assailed Clinton's health care reform on programmatic grounds but never challenged the basic notion that

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government ought to guarantee the right to health coverage. This tactic left conservatives vulnerable to a more modest, artfully constructed progressivism. "Conservatives spent thirty years rolling back overreaching liberalism," argues Marshall Wittmann of the Heritage Foundation, a conservative think tank. "The conservative challenge is how to confront a liberalism that is not going to overreach." Ken Weinstein, also of the Heritage Foundation, says: "New Democrats have beaten the Republicans back on this."

Already, Clinton advisers and like-minded reporters are spinning this explanation into a familiar morality tale: Clinton runs for president as a New Democrat and wins; he governs as an Old Democrat and is repudiated by the voters; he returns to his New Democrat roots, slays the Republicans, and fashions a revamped majority Democratic party. "We have successfully advanced a different philosophy of government, going beyond the old argument that government was the problem or that government is the solution to which people are entitled," the president told *U.S. News & World Report*, which seemed to agree.

To be sure, the New Democrats did get one big thing right. Clinton, they maintained in 1992, had to inoculate himself on issues like deficit reduction, crime, and welfare before voters would accept new roles for government. In the beginning, during Clinton's inoculation stage, the New Democrat philosophy looked suspiciously like a cover for the old conservative Southern Democrat philosophy. But now that the second stage of the plan is in effect, its logic seems obvious. Clinton has rebuilt the constituency for activist government, not just by breaking down his ideas into smaller chunks, but by remaking the political landscape and carving out New Democrat terrain.

Yet the story isn't quite that simple. One of the classic debates within the Democratic Party—longtime TNR readers will remember that it consumed many of these pages—concerned the efficacy of big, universal government programs, like Social Security and Medicare, versus small, targeted ones. Traditional liberals argued for big programs on the grounds that they directly benefited a large enough population to maintain political support. New Democrats disdained this as a bribe to the middle class, maintaining that, in an era of fiscal austerity, government had to confine its largess to those who needed it most.

The New Democrats won in the end, in that they got to run the White House while the liberals had to settle for bylines in *The American Prospect*. (I worked at the magazine, and it's really not a bad trade.) Yet things haven't worked out quite the way the New Democrats thought they would. Sure, Clinton's new agenda doesn't include big entitlements. But it also carefully reserves a big chunk of its benevolence for the nonpoor. Clinton's child-care package, for instance, parcels out a lot of tax cuts for businesses and the middle class to go along with some succor for the poor. This is just the sort of trade-off that New Democrat types used to deride.

Why did the plan go awry? Because two of the New Democrat credos—making government work more efficiently and building credibility with middle-income voters—have, in practice, run into each other. The result? A dissatisfying amalgam of the two philosophies—programs that are neither big nor particularly well-targeted. Spreading the bounty across the economic spectrum is okay if the government has plenty of money for everybody. But if you have only a little money to spend, then spreading it thin instead of concentrating it on the poor becomes a morally dubious proposition.

This illustrates the essential limitation of Clinton's renewed activism. Politics not only constrains how much money he can spend, it also constrains the way he spends it. While his agenda may be entirely worthwhile, it settles nonetheless for second-best solutions.

Take Clinton's plan to expand the tax break for companies that invest in low-income housing. This will no doubt create more housing for the poor. But the primary problem with low-income housing is not a lack of availability, it's that the poor can't afford the rent. Clinton could accomplish the same goal more efficiently by expanding the availability of certificates and vouchers, which directly subsidize rents for the poor. Unfortunately, vouchers have political liabilities—they don't directly aid businesses, and they are not a tax cut. Good New Democrat policy does not always make for good New Democrat politics.

The paradox of Clinton's new agenda shows up even more starkly in another item on his list: enrolling the near-elderly—those age 55 to 64—in Medicare. A growing fraction of this population no longer works and lacks health insurance. So the White House proposes to let them pay for insurance through Medicare. That's good as far as it goes. But then things get tricky. The White House insists that this new program won't cost the government money, since the new fees paid by new enrollees will cover the cost of their medical care. Maybe administration officials have to say that in order for the program to stand any chance of passage. Yet this claim makes no sense. If the uninsured near-elderly could afford to pay for their own health insurance, they would have done so already through the private market. They lack insurance because they can't afford it. The government cannot give them more coverage than the private sector without somehow subsidizing it.

And yet there is still somehow a point in this proposal, as there is in the rest of the new Clinton agenda. The very process of contemplating ways to offer medical coverage to an uninsured population, or to house the poor or repair inner-city schools, suggests a thought that would have been heretical just a year ago: new government spending may not always be good, but sometimes the alternative can be worse. And the import of Clinton's new agenda lies here—not in the sum of its disparate parts, but in the whole of this subversive notion. •

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BOOKS & The Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

A Death, A Devolution

Heralded by critical trumpeting at an extraordinary pitch, Alexander Sokurov makes his American theatrical debut. (At the Film Forum in New York. Some of his work has been seen in the U.S. at special events, festivals and the like, but now he gets his first theater run.) This Russian filmmaker, 47, has made 15 documentaries ranging in length from 10 to 249 minutes, and eight fictional features, about which there has been swelling celebration. At last, with his most recent feature, **Mother and Son** (International), he is here.

Critical comment on this film has centered on its difference in purity from most of cinema, and the first minutes announce its heterodoxy. The opening shot, seen at a slanting and softly distorting angle, is of a young man reclining next to his somnolent mother. It almost seems a still shot until, after a daring lapse of time, the young man smiles gently, then speaks to his mother. Almost inaudibly she replies.

This beginning fixes a good deal about the 73-minute film that follows. Sokurov sets his tempo with us, almost like a conductor with an orchestra; he requests us to slow down from what we may consider true cinematic pace. He sets his lighting key, generally sepia and gray except for some patches of sunlight near the end. He sets the sound level of the dialogue, which is sparse anyway, between the only two people in the picture. (The script is credited to Yuri Arabov, but apparently the subject is the director's.) And he sets the closeness between the son and, as we quickly learn, his dying mother.

The story is easy to tell: there is none. When the mother says she wants to go for a walk, the son carries her out—the simple house is in the country—and puts her on a bench. He goes back into the house to get a book with some postcards in it to read to her. (It's typical of Sokurov's method that, while the son goes on his errand, the camera simply waits with the mother, moving slightly to welcome him back.) From the postcards we learn that the mother had an admirer and that she was a teacher. The son carries her back inside. She falls again into somnolence. The son goes outside again, walks through fields, sees a passing train in the distance, cries against a tree, goes back, and whispers to his departing mother that, as she has promised, they will meet hereafter. His last words: "Wait for me."

Obviously all the above describes an act of courage. Sokurov intended to discard, not flout, the usual filmmaking expectations in order to concentrate on poetic distillation. For this intent there can be only admiration. The problem is that the execution doesn't come up to the intent. Over and over again as I watched (which I did twice), I found myself holding almost desperately to his intent, his sheer intent, to sustain me through what seemed vacuous passages, rather than the implicative, charged ones they were meant to be.

Mother and Son becomes an object to be considered rather than an experience to be shared. Some reasons: the mother's almost continuous stupor throughout moves the film toward the clinical rather than the exalting. The one moment when the son has an outburst of grief, alone in the woods, Sokurov views in a very long shot, steady and cold. Anything blatantly lachrymose would have been destructive, but Sokurov's choice is frigid, almost proud of its frigidity.

Compare *Mother and Son* with a film in somewhat the same vein (not the same subject), *Through the Olive Trees* by the Iranian master, Abbas Kiarostami. This is to compare ambition with realization. For Kiarostami, time and silence are instruments of generation. There is no such thing as nothing happening in Kiarostami's film: we are always enmeshed. Something is always happening even when nothing much is seen or heard for long stretches. Gilberto Perez has said: "Kiarostami believes in beauty as he believes in truth, not as a conclusion but as an undertaking." This perception is of use in illuminating Sokurov, who concludes rather than undertakes.

Much, too, has been made of Sokurov's painterly eye (his cinematographer is Alexei Fyodorov), his attempts to integrate nature—"creation," the son calls it—with the being of the characters. Quite apart from Kiarostami's success in the matter, this integration was much more full in such an early antecedent as Dovzhenko's *Earth* (1930), especially in the sequence of the old peasant's death.

Still, it's well to remember that *Mother and Son* is only one of the works of this unusual director. More would be wel-

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Amistad. *A slave revolt in 1839 is graphically recreated by Steven Spielberg and an excellent cast, along with the resulting trial. The cinematic texture more than compensates for some compressions in the story. (Reviewed 12/22/97)* **Ma Vie en Rose.** *From Belgium, a delicate account of a small boy who wants to be a girl. The ending cops out, but the situation is perceptively treated. (1/26/98)* **The Sweet Hereafter.** *A snowbound town is desolated by a school bus accident. A lawyer attempting to help the sufferers uncovers human depths. Reticent and poignant. (12/8/97)* **Wag the Dog.** *Sizzling political satire about salvaging a presidential election campaign by inventing a war. The plot frays, but Robert De Niro and Dustin Hoffman keep perking. (2/2/98)*—**SK**

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come. At the very least this film teases the appetite.

Something regrettable is happening in one sort of serious film. Pictures about the Irish Troubles are becoming a genre. When we see, or used to see, Westerns, our first job was to sort out good guys from bad guys, then to look for twists that might give the story some novelty. This procedure in fantasy-land is almost becoming true with films about harsh Northern Ireland reality.

This is not to malign the sincerity of Jim Sheridan, who directed and co-wrote **The Boxer** (Universal) and who made *In the Name of the Father.* But it is certainly to say that here he had nothing to add, in insight or fact, to what we already know of the Troubles. Eager to keep the subject before us, Sheridan simply thought of new plot twists (he hoped) to justify another go.

First twist is the love story. In *The Boxer* an Irish activist who has served a 14-year-term in a British prison, Danny, returns to Belfast and remeets his beloved, Maggie. She has since married and has a son, and her husband is now in prison himself. To this odd triangle, add that Maggie's father is an activist leader, and the result is torn loyalties in personal lives and in politics.

Add, too, that Danny is a boxer who returns to his profession. The strained metaphorical use of his profession, strained further by his opening a gym for Catholic and Protestant boys, winds its way through the all-too-predictable chronicle of murders.

Danny is played by Daniel Day-Lewis, the least likely pugilist since Alain Delon in *Rocco and His Brothers* (1960). Emily Watson, who made a great success of her recurrent hysteria in *Breaking the Waves,* plays Maggie with damp, somewhat dreary honesty. Her father is the sturdy Brian Cox, a theater veteran who imprints authenticity on whatever he touches. But so much of the film is familiar, in filmic terms, that it's uphill for Cox all the way. •

A real and unlikely hero.

Homage to Varian Fry

By Alfred Kazin

The Armistice with Nazi Germany that France had to sign in June 1940 contained a clause, Article XIX, obliging the French Government to "surrender upon demand all Germans named by the German government in France, as well as in French possessions, colonies, Protectorate Territories, and Mandates." "Germans" originally meant all inhabitants of the greater German Reich—Germans, Austrians, Czechs, and many Poles—but by 1940 it meant every political opponent whom the Nazis wanted to get their hands on. There were American relief organizations in France sponsored by the YMCA, the Unitarians, and the Quakers. But a group of American liberals, outraged by the Nazis' open violation of the right of asylum, formed the Emergency Rescue Committee to bring political and intellectual refugees out of France before the Gestapo and the Italian and Spanish Fascist police caught them in what their rescuer Varian Fry was to call "the most gigantic man-trap in history."

The volunteer (there were not many) whom the Committee chose to direct this effort from Marseille was Varian Fry, a 32-year-old Harvard-trained classicist perfectly at home in Europe. Indeed, on the surface, with his elegant name and his precise manner, he may have seemed just a little too refined. With his classmate Lincoln Kirstein, he had founded the pioneer journal of modernism *The Hound and Horn.* When I met him at *The New Republic* after the war, he liked, on our many walks, a little affectedly, to show off the little dogtricks that he had taught his French poodle Clovis, whom he had named after the ancient king of the Franks. But Varian was at heart so pure and intense a democratic conscience that he could not bear the lingering Popular Front sentimentality about Stalin on *The New Republic*; and he resigned from the magazine in 1945, just before Henry Wallace took it over.

In fact, for thirteen months in France, Varian was our own Scarlet Pimpernel. He was endlessly bold and resourceful in the always correct manner that was natural to him. And he was forced to leave France because his labors on behalf of Jews and political refugees had enraged both Vichy's pro-Fascist bureaucrats and reactionary American consular officials. Varian was one of the great civilian heroes of the war. In the face of the most maddening bureaucratic slights, delays, and hostilities presented by Vichy France, Franco's Spain, and the American consul in Marseille (he finally got the French to expel Varian), my friend organized from a room in the Hotel Splendide the ramshackle yet somehow effective organization that helped to get virtually 2,000 people to safety. Varian is the only American honored as a "Righteous Gentile" at Yad Vashem, Israel's memorial to the Holocaust.

Surrender on Demand, Varian's wonderful account of his noble adventure in France, his "story of an experiment in democratic solidarity ... of illegal work under the nose of the Gestapo," was first published without much effect in 1945, and it has now been brought back into print in conjunction with the splendid exhibition "Assignment: Rescue, The Story of Varian Fry and the Emergency Rescue Committee" at the Jewish Museum in New York. The museum has also enclosed in its press kit Varian's essay "The Massacre of the Jews," which appeared in *The New Republic*'s issue of December 21, 1942. Unlikely as this seems now, the anguish that Varian brought to the subject did not altogether interest people at the magazine (I had just joined the staff), who were languishing for the New Deal that Roosevelt had discarded in wartime. "That such things could be done by contemporary western Europeans, heirs of the humanist tradition, seems hardly possible": only Varian, hardly innocent but obstinately virtuous, would have written that sentence. He ended his article by demanding "a little thing, but at the same time a big thing"—that the United States "offer asylum now, without delay or red tape, to those few fortunate enough to escape from the Aryan paradise."

Surrender on Demand
by Varian Fry
(Johnson Books, 272 pp., $15)

Assignment: Rescue, The Story of Varian Fry and the Emergency Rescue Committee
at The Jewish Museum in New York
through March 29

Alfred Kazin is the author most recently of *God and the American Writer* (Knopf).

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In Berlin on July 15, 1935, Varian had seen Hitler's troopers attack Jews in "the first pogrom." On November 9, 1938, Nazi leaders had openly encouraged the burning of synagogues, the pillage of Jewish homes, and the murder of their inhabitants. "Injecting air-bubbles into the bloodstream," Varian observed in his *New Republic* article in 1942, "is cheap, clean, and efficient, producing clots, embolisms, and death within a few hours..."

> Even though Hitler may lose this war, he may win it anyway, at least as far as Europe is concerned.... The Christian churches might also help ... the Pope by threatening with excommunication all Catholics who in any way participate in these frightful crimes ... There is a report, which I have not been able to verify, that the Office of War Information has banned mention of the massacres in its shortwave broadcasts.... The fact that the Nazis do not commit their massacres in Western Europe, but transport their victims to the East before destroying them, is certain proof that they fear the effect on the local populations of the news of their crimes....
>
> Despite the fact that the urgency of the situation has never been greater, immigration into the United States in the year 1942 will have been less than ten percent of what it has been in 'normal' years before Hitler, when some of the largest quotas were not filled. There have been bureaucratic delays in visa procedure which have literally condemned to death many stalwart democrats.

Courtesy The Jewish Museum, New York

VARIAN FRY, MARSEILLE, 1940

This was the man who had gone to Marseille two years before with just $3,000 from patrons of the Emergency Rescue Committee, only to find himself initially frustrated by the delusions of some VIPs whom he had come to rescue. Rudolph Breitscheid, the leader of the Social Democratic bloc in the Reichstag, openly frequented a sidewalk café with Rudolph Hilferding, formerly German Minister to France. He boasted that Hitler would "never dare" to arrest him. He was wrong. He was nabbed and never heard from again. Giuseppe Modigliani, the head of the Italian Socialist Party and a Jew (and the brother of the painter), was easy to spot. He insisted on wearing in all weather a fur coat, a gift from the Garment Workers Union in New York, and he adamantly refused to shave his beard. "I've always worn it."

Franz Werfel and his wife Alma were at the Hotel du Louvre et de la Paix, in hiding under the name of Mrs. Werfel's former husband Gustav Mahler, who had died in 1911. Werfel looked "exactly like his photographs: large, dumpy, and pallid, like a half-filled sack of flour. His hair was thin on top and too long on the sides. He was wearing a silk dressing gown and soft slippers and was sitting all over a small gilt chair." The Werfels had fled from Paris to Lourdes, where they had sought the protection of the Church. Werfel, a Jew, had begun *The Song of Bernadette*. When they realized that they would never be able to leave France from Lourdes, they came to Marseille to get the American visas waiting for them at the Consulate. But there was now a general ban on exit visas.

The Werfels insisted on ordering up champagne as they went over their problem with Varian. He had just arrived and he hadn't yet found out what the possibilities were. The Werfels had heard of refugees going down to the Spanish frontier and getting over safely, but they didn't know if those lucky souls had reached Lisbon for passage to America. Most of them had probably been arrested in Spain and handed over to the Gestapo. There was also the risk of being arrested for travelling without permission. It was all very confusing. What were they to do? They finally got away, at first encumbering their saviors with twelve suitcases. But Alma made it into Spain on foot, Mahler's manuscripts in her pack.

The American Federation of Labor had succeeded in persuading the State Department to grant emergency visas to a long list of European labor leaders, and it had dispatched Frank Bohn to help them with the escape. Bohn, a hearty extrovert who talked like "an itinerant revivalist," was one of the two or three Americans in France prepared to help Varian. Through Bohn he met a young German social democrat named Albert Hirschman, a political refugee who was "very intelligent and eternally good-natured and cheerful," who joined his staff. "I began to call him Beamish," Varian wrote, "because of his impish eyes and perennial pout, which would turn into a broad grin in an instant." Staff conferences were held in the bathroom, where Varian turned on the faucets to create a deafening rush of water.

Another invaluable aide was "vivacious and ebullient" Lena Fishman, who had worked in the Paris office of the Joint Distribution Committee, was competent in English, French, German, Russian, Polish, and Spanish, and was especially useful in calming the excited. "Il ne faut pas exagérer," she used to say. (Lena had her own way of talking. When I first met her, she asked me who my publisher was. I told her, but the name obviously meant nothing to her. "Je n'ai jamais couché avec," she said.)

Most of the refugees whose names had been given to Varian in New York were still missing. Nobody knew where they were or what had become of them. But refugees started coming to Varian's room at the Splendide as soon as word went out.

> Many of them had been through hell; their nerves were shattered and their courage was gone. Many had been herded into concentration camps at the outbreak of the war, then released, then interned again when the Germans began their great offensive in May. In the concentration camps they had waited fearfully while the Wehr-

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macht drew nearer and nearer. It was often literally at the last moment that they had had a chance to save themselves. Then they had joined the great exodus to the south, sometimes walking hundreds of miles to get away from the Nazis. . . .

Nor was it only the refugees from Germany and Austria who were worried. Luis Companys, the Catalan trade-union leader, had been picked up by the Nazis in Belgium or the occupied part of France and sent down to Spain, where he was promptly garroted. And the French police were treating foreigners with a combination of muddle and brutality which left very few of them with any desire to stay in France longer than they had to.

In big cities such as Marseille, the large and constantly changing refugee population kept the police nervous, and occasionally stirred them to mass arrests called *rafles*. Fortunately for Varian, the first to come to the Splendide were young and vigorous German and Austrian Socialists who were not afraid, once Varian gave them American money, to go down to the Spanish frontier and cross over on foot. One of them gave Varian a map of the frontier, showing that they planned to cross along a cemetery wall at Cerbère. They knew where to avoid the French border control. You were not to go farther into Spain until you got the Spanish *entrada* stamp on your passport. The Spaniards were interested only in Spanish transit visas and, above all, in money.

Refugees who hadn't yet received American visas were taking Chinese or Siamese visas and getting Portuguese transit visas on almost any identification they possessed which seemed to promise that the holder would go on from Portugal. The first difficulty was getting into Marseille, that is, past the police control for passengers arriving by train. You could avoid the police only by going into the station restaurant through a service corridor to the Hotel Terminus. There were risks. Foreigners weren't supposed to travel in France without safe conducts issued by the military authorities. Any foreigner caught traveling without such a safe conduct was likely to be sent to a concentration camp, where his future was uncertain, and where the Gestapo could get him if he was wanted.

The Nazis were dreaded, the French were corrupt and brutal, the American consular officials were difficult and nasty. So difficult and nasty, indeed, that they became Varian's particular antagonists. In a short preface to *Surrender on Demand*, ex-Secretary of State Warren Christopher writes of Varian that "regretfully, during his lifetime, his heroic actions never received the support they deserved from the United States government, particularly the State Department." That is putting it mildly. Varian's book is too taken up with the many people he saved (and the many more he couldn't save) to relate how Assistant Secretary of State Breckenridge Long managed to keep immigration quotas unfilled when thousands of refugees were desperate to get into America.

When a member of Varian's staff named Danny was arrested, and Vichy's Ministry of Finance intimated that Danny would be let off with a fine if the American Embassy intervened, Varian had no hope that this would happen. He was aware of the Embassy's hostility to "aliens." To his surprise, he was able "to touch something very deep in the American consul at Marseille, who helped get Danny off." This was astounding. Harry Bingham, son of Hiram Bingham, the former governor of Connecticut and United States senator, had been a humane, helpful figure as head of the visa section at the Marseille Consulate. But he was recalled, and his successor, Varian wrote, "seemed to delight in making autocratic decisions and refusing as many visas as he could."

Varian sought a visa for Largo Caballero, the Socialist prime minister of Republican Spain when Franco launched the Civil War. The Consul had never

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HOW THE STATES TOOK ON THE CIGARETTE GIANTS

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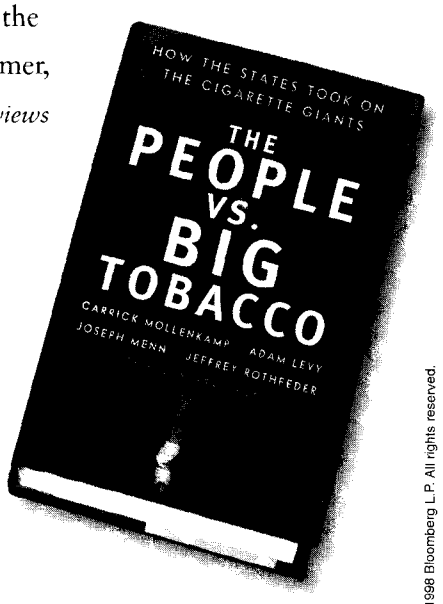

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heard of him, and when he was finally informed who Caballero was, he said: "Oh, one of those Reds." Varian explained that Caballero had resigned the premiership rather than continue to cooperate with the Communists. "Well," the Vice-Consul said, "it doesn't make any difference to me what his politics are. If he has any political views at all, we don't want him. We don't want any agitators in the United States. We've got too many already." The court at Aix had refused to grant Caballero's extradition to Spain. If he could get him an American visa, Varian thought, he might be able to smuggle him to Casablanca and there put him on a boat for America. Caballero remained a prisoner of the Nazis until the end of the war.

Both the Vichy French and the American Embassy now sought to get Varian out of France. The Gestapo was bringing pressure on the French police to arrest him immediately. A high police official informed him that "you have caused my good friend the Consul-General of the United States much annoyance.... Unless you leave France of your own free will, I shall be obliged to arrest you and place you in *résidence forcée* in some small town far from Marseille, where you can do no harm." As Varian got up to go, he asked the official, "Tell me frankly, why are you so much opposed to me?" "Because you have protected Jews and anti-Nazis."

Varian played for time. He had no assurance of a replacement, and his staff was afraid that their "relief" organization would collapse if he was forced out of France. And finally he was. The Embassy had refused to reissue his passport unless he agreed to leave at once. The organization sent out nearly 300 people between the time he left in August 1941 and the time it was raided and closed by the police, on June 2, 1942.

Varian returned to the States, wrote his book, and quit *The New Republic* in protest against the pro-Soviet sentiments of its editors. His last years were unhappy. His first wife died, and he was separated from his second. He moved to Connecticut, taught Latin at a local school, and died in 1967. During his thirteen months in France, Varian's organization offered assistance to 4,000 people, and between 1,200 to 1,800 of those people made it to safety. Varian's organization saved British soldiers and pilots, Marc Chagall, Jacques Lipchitz, André Breton, Max Ernst, André Masson, Hans Namuth, Hannah Arendt, Wanda Landowska, Marcel Duchamp, Randolfo Pacciardi (leader of Italian exiles fighting in the Spanish Civil War), the German poet Hans Sahl, Victor Serge, Max Ascoli, the pianist Heinz Jolles, the Catholic writer Edgar Alexander-Emmerich, the psychiatrist Dr. Bruno Strauss, the German art critic Paul Westheim, the Sicilian novelist Giuseppe Garetto, the Surrealist poet Benjamin Péret, the former liberal Prime Minister of Prussia Otto Klepper, the museum director Charles Stirling, the novelist Jean Malaquais. There were many many more. Chagall would not leave until he was assured there were cows in America.

Varian rescued also many people who were not famous, not distinguished, not artistic. And how it burned him that there were many, many more he was unable to rescue. This man really cared. •

The immoral incentives of a modern adventurer.

The Return of Che Guevara

By Enrique Krauze

"Do not forget this minor *condottiere* of the twentieth century," wrote Che Guevara to his parents, as he was about to leave for Bolivia, the final port in his adventurous voyage through life. The thirtieth anniversary of his execution in a desolate Bolivian village on October 9, 1967 has triggered a flood of attention to a figure who was in some ways the quintessential representative of the ideals, the obsessions, and the illusions of the 1960s. Jon Lee Anderson, Jorge Castañeda and Paco Ignacio Taibo II have produced provocative books—each one applying a different perspective (and a different sensibility) to the story of Che Guevara—an epic, a puzzle, a warning.

When Ernesto Guevara and Fidel Castro and their small band of comrades left the coast of Mexico for Cuba in the barely seaworthy *Granma* on November 25, 1956, it would be the most significant of Che's many journeys. Before him lay the revolution to which he would make a major contribution, the vision of a communist utopia for which he yearned but which he could not create through the force of his will, the dream of "many Vietnams" that he could not realize, the veneration for his ideas, and the infectious desire to follow his path that sent thousands of young Latin Americans off to the mountains, ready to create "the new man" or meet a hero's death—and the sequel of devastation and slaughter left by the guerrilla wars across Latin America.

Those years of revolution cannot be understood without considering an earlier development: the growth of anti-Americanism during the last two centuries of Latin American history. As the nineteenth century wore on, the seed of nationalist resentment toward the United States took root on the border and spread south. The anti-Americanism of Mexican conservatives—based in large part on their devotion to the Spanish and Catholic legacy of the country—seemed to be completely justified by the American invasion of Mexico in 1847. And the Mexican liberals, who had preferred the American model of government, feeling themselves betrayed by the nation that was the source of their ideals, came to agree with the conservatives on one issue at least: a mounting resentment toward the "Colossus of the North."

By the turn of the century, the policy of "the big stick"—the arrogant ubiquity of the United States throughout Central America and the Caribbean, and its "peaceful penetration" into all the major areas of the Mexican economy—was crucial in the formation of a fierce regional nationalism. The sites of resentment proliferated, from the Rio Grande to Patagonia: the mines of Chile

Enrique Krauze is the author of *Mexico: Biography of Power* (HarperCollins).

Che Guevara: A Revolutionary Life
by Jon Lee Anderson
(Grove Press, 814 pp., $35)

Compañero: The Life and Death of Che Guevara
by Jorge G. Castañeda
translated by Marina Castañeda
(Knopf, 456 pp., $30)

Guevara, also known as Che
by Paco Ignacio Taibo II
translated by Martin Michael Roberts
(St. Martin's, 691 pp., $35)

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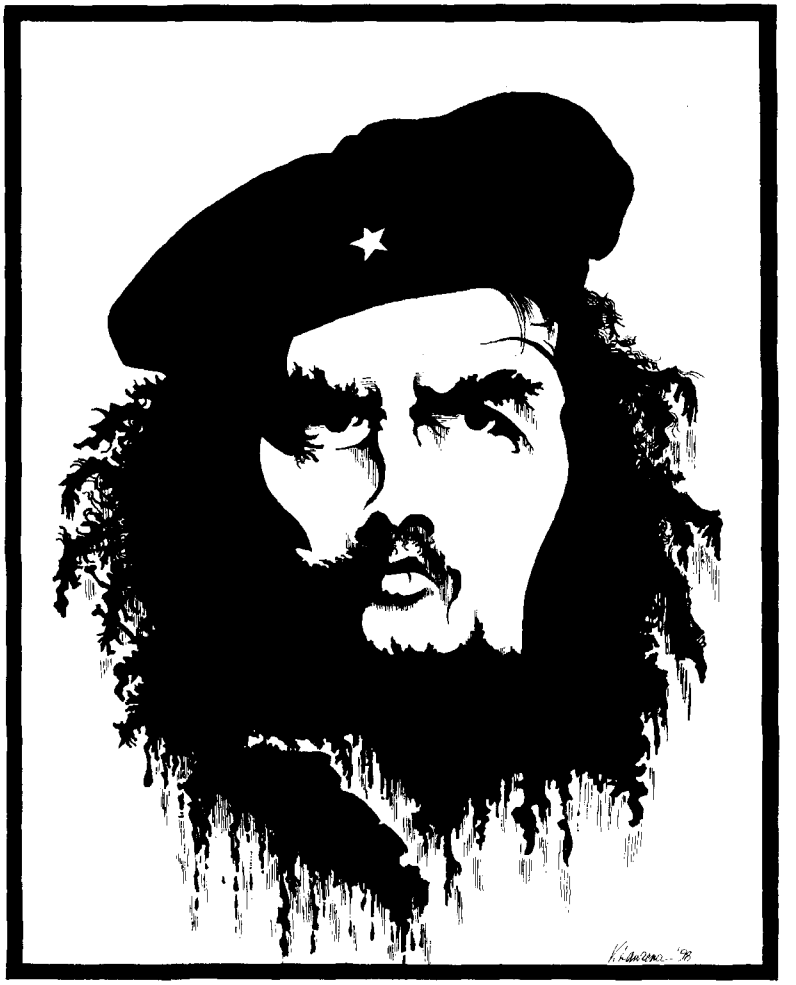
and Bolivia, the oil companies of Venezuela, the banana plantations of Central America, the Mexican railroads in the era of Porfirio Díaz. American diplomacy in Latin America not only ran parallel to the interests of American business, it became indistinguishable from them. An American president would eventually describe a savage Caribbean dictator as "a son of a bitch, but our son of a bitch."

Probably no Latin country (aside from Puerto Rico) would come to feel and to resent American influence more than Cuba. To be sure, the resentment was always mixed with the enormous cultural influence of the United States and the widespread admiration for the country that had sheltered and then supported the leaders of Cuba's War of Independence against Spain in 1895. But the giant's political, economic, and moral treatment of its small island neighbor was a very different matter. José Martí, the hero of Cuban liberation from Spain, had lived for twenty years as an exile in the United States, but he would come to write that "the people of the United States ... proclaim the right to crown themselves rulers through geographic morality."

From the beginning of the century and into the 1950s, the collective memory of Cuba came to consist of a series of crushing historical images: American Marines breaking strikes on the island, "special political arrangements" converting Cuba into a de facto protectorate of the United States, the American-owned sugar companies dominating the rural economy, and the American-based mafia controlling (through huge pay-offs to Cuban government officials) the pleasure industries of the city—miles of beaches, gambling tables, and prostitution for the visitors from 90 miles away. In the 1940s, Cuba was ranked among the most prosperous Latin American countries; but behind those numbers a terrible anger was growing. It had been presciently formulated by a Cuban journalist in 1922: "Hatred of the Americans will become the religion of the Cubans."



CHE GUEVARA BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

By the beginning of World War II, Latin American liberals were a species on its way to extinction. They were being replaced by the extremes of right and left, which were equally contemptuous of what they termed "Anglo-Saxon democracy." The brief episode of Roosevelt's "Good Neighbor" policy and the heyday of Pan-Americanism was quickly followed by the brutal proxy politics of the Cold War. What had happened in Mexico in the nineteenth century now happened in various countries in Latin America: the right—formerly pro-German but with its model defeated in war—would find some common ground with the growing left in anti-American nationalism.

There was a basis in reality to the anti-Americanism of the south. Latin America was mired in backwardness, compared to the Western world as a whole and especially compared to the United States. The perception of economic abuse, of ethnic and cultural disdain radiating from the north, was so common and so valid that even liberals, when asked to choose between the Soviet Union and the United States, had their doubts. The Mexican intellectual Daniel Cosío Villegas, a man untouched by communism and far from being a Marxist, wrote in 1947 of "the dense layer of distrust and rancor—dormant for now—throughout Latin America against the United States.... These countries, though they may seem to be almost abjectly submissive, when moved by profound despair and burning hatred, will be capable of anything."

The United States would not become aware quickly enough of this swelling tide of hatred. Or when the Americans did take note of it, they would act to feed it, as in Guatemala in 1954, when Colonel Castillo Armas, openly supported by the CIA, violently overthrew the nationalist and reformist government of Jacobo Arbenz. The spark that would later flame into the Cuban Revolution was truly struck in the streets of Guatemala, among its labor unions and its students. And it was there that a 26-year-old Argentine doctor, closely observing the sequence of events, mourned the fact that Arbenz had not armed the people and that his government had fallen "betrayed within and beyond its borders ... like the Spanish Republic" and then added that "it is time that the club be answered with the club."

The Argentine doctor was in Guatemala on one of his wanderings through Latin America. He had become convinced that "some day the dark forces that oppress the subjugated, colonial world will be defeated"; and he was filled with "growing indignation" in response to "the way in which the gringos have been treating Latin America." Ernesto Guevara de la Serna had been born on June 14, 1928 (or according to Anderson's research, one month earlier, the later date meant to mask his mother's premarital pregnancy) to an upper-middle-class family fallen on hard times, a family that was left-wing and egalitarian in its values. They traveled from city to city as Ernesto's father shifted jobs, but also in the effort to find a place where their eldest son Ernesto might find relief from the condition that was his lifelong curse and stimulus—

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the asthma that he developed as a child.

The attacks would almost strip the boy of his breath, force him to rest motionless, to lie against his mother's breast or sleep pressed close against the chest of his father. In the city of Córdoba, the family found a climate less harmful to Ernesto, and there he went to school. His attendance was irregular, punctuated by asthmatic attacks, by injections and inhalations. During his enforced days of rest, he would try to free himself from his confinement with novels of travel: Robert Louis Stevenson, Jack London, all of Jules Verne.

But the adolescent Ernesto was not about to accept the limitations imposed by his asthma, no more than he would tolerate other limitations in the future. He dedicated himself to escaping from his precarious physical condition through pure will. He took up rugby, a favorite sport of the Anglophile upper classes of Argentina. His fellow players called him "Furibundo Serna," or "Raging Serna," for the intensity of his game. Mastering problems by the effort of his will would become one of the leitmotifs of Guevara's life. The constant shadow of his own illness, the beginning of his beloved and brave mother's twenty-year struggle with cancer, and his impotent presence at the bed of his dying grandmother all probably contributed to his choice of medicine as a career.

But he could not be an ordinary student. He would set off on voyages, traveling rough, through Argentina and later—with a friend and a motorcycle—across the expanse of Latin America. The urge to "move on" became another constant in his life. He kept a travel journal and steadily wrote to his family and his girlfriends. Women entered his life when he was quite young; he was a lively and attractive man. Yet he tended to "move on" from them as well. In the beginning it was a search for adventure without direction, but then his roamings—and his studies—came to be charged with a purpose: to confront and to diminish human pain. He worked in leper hospitals on his travels, he thought he might become a celebrated allergist; but it was the discovery of America, the southern continent and its relation to the north, the vast land and its miseries, that finally possessed him.

On the motorcycle trip of 1952 (he took various forms of ground travel, as the bike broke down) Guevara noted the "absurd sense of caste" in Bolivia, and on his way to Machu Picchu he commented in his journal that "Peru hasn't yet emerged from the feudal condition of the colony. It's still waiting for the blood of a liberating revolution." As usual, he took on his asthma like an enemy to be faced down, swimming four kilometers in the Amazon. He would later write that "America will be the theater of my adventures in a way much more important than I would have believed. I really think I have come to understand America and I feel myself American, different from any other people on the earth."

At the end of his trip, Guevara spent a brief and unhappy time in Miami, and there he had a premonitory vision: "I will charge against barricades and trenches, I will stain my weapons with blood." He returned to Argentina and quickly finished his medical studies. Then he left for good, for "America." With the fall of the Arbenz government to the CIA-sponsored coup in Guatemala (the beginning of almost four decades of guerrilla warfare and army genocide in that tragic country), Guevara stood at the threshold of his destiny. He moved toward a more conscious Marxism, a strongly pro-Soviet position based on emotion rather than knowledge (he would cling to it for years and then in large part abandon it), and an ever-stronger sense of the social illness that he felt was stripping the breath away from Latin America. He had a very specific idea of the cause of all this: "the blond and efficient administrators, the Yankee masters."

Among the young radicals drawn to Guatemala in the Arbenz years, he met his first wife, the Peruvian exile Hilda Gadea, who was three years older and politically more knowledgeable. It was a relationship of intellectual and political comradeship. True to its tradition of welcoming political exiles, Mexico gave shelter to the young couple and other refugees from the Guatemalan coup. Che and Hilda were married in Mexico in 1955. And there he met Fidel Castro, who "impressed me as an extraordinary man. The most impossible things were just what he would confront and resolve. He had an exceptional faith in the fact that once he set out for Cuba he would get there. That once there he would fight. That once he began fighting, he would win."

All this preparation for the arrival on the world stage of El Che (as the Cuban guerrillas would dub him) is presented in detail in the long narrative accounts of Anderson and Taibo, and more concisely by Castañeda in his book, which is more an analysis than a narrative. Anderson's volume is a substantial achievement; and it has already been sold to Hollywood. Yet in certain ways it is the least valuable of these three books. Anderson is an investigative reporter who has specialized in Latin America. He spent much time in Cuba working on this biography. He writes serviceable prose (except for some of his early translations from more colloquial statements by Che or others, which are so dictionary-literal and awkward that they must seem almost indecipherable to a non-Spanish speaker: "we were so sophisticated that Ernesto seemed an opprobrium," "something which has really developed in me is the sense of the massive in counterposition to the personal"); but his book is rather cold, without the deep feeling of Taibo or the incisive criticism of Castañeda. And as investigative journalism, it shows a common flaw of the genre: there is too much reverence for "sources" (such as Che's second wife Aleida March, or the CIA radio-man Felix Rodríguez, who spoke with Che shortly before he was executed by the Bolivian army). Still, Anderson can be very good at describing events, and he vividly presents the actions of the United States and the Soviet Union and such "hot stories" as John Foster Dulles's pressure on the new Guatemalan government (the pressure only partially succeeded) to deny safe-conduct passes (and life) to pro-Arbenz people such as Guevara, who had taken refuge in the capital's foreign embassies.

The Mexican writers Jorge Castañeda and Paco Ignacio Taibo II have both been active on the political left. Castañeda, the son of a Russian-born mother with strong Marxist beliefs and a Mexican nationalist diplomat (who was Minister of Foreign Affairs under President José López Portillo), has studied and lived in Mexico, France, and the United States. He was a central figure in persuading the Mexican government to officially recognize the guerrilla movements of Central America. In recent years, though, he has become a thoughtful critic of the left and the revolutionary experience of the last three decades. Castañeda's evolution is rather unique in the Latin American intellectual context, with its tendencies toward narrow ideological positions. His previous book, *Utopia Unarmed*, and his book on Che Guevara, are the most serious attempts at self-analysis by an intellectual of the left in "our America."

Taibo is a very different kind of intellectual. He is not an analyst but a prolific writer, who has produced over twenty books, including popular detective novels. His father is also a writer and was a Republican refugee from the Spanish Civil War. Taibo is known as a turbulent, radical, polemical author. He recently announced that if the new

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center-left government of Mexico City should give him the assignment, he would implement "a cultural revolution" in the capital. (We are lucky that he didn't get the job.) In a more emotionally and psychologically penetrating fashion than Anderson, Taibo moves smoothly back and forth between his own sentences and those of Che himself (from journals and letters), as well as the words of other participants, creating a sympathetic and multi-faceted figuration of the man and his deeds. (Unfortunately the English translation, though accurate enough on the whole, does not do justice to Taibo's style; and the American publishers have made some strange cuts and changes.)

Taibo and Anderson take Che through his decision to join the Cuban rebels in Mexico, the arduous clandestine training and the voyage in the leaky *Granma* to Cuba, where Batista's troops—alerted by an informer—were waiting for them. Almost always, Taibo's descriptive powers and literary sense for the telling detail ("there were eighty-two men crammed on board, elbow to elbow, huddling against the cold of their last night in Mexico") make his the stronger account.

By the time he set out on the voyage that would finally define his life, Che's ideas had taken on a sharply ideological cast. He was reading Marx; he supported the Russian intervention in Hungary; he took classes in Russian (though he would never be any good at languages); he established a friendship with Nikolai Leonov, a KGB agent at the Russian embassy in Mexico. With a few exceptions, such as Che himself and Fidel's brother Raúl, the expeditionaries on the *Granma*—most of whom were killed on landing—did not consider themselves Marxists. They were "guerrillas," like the first idealistic adventurers to have been so designated, the irregular Spanish soldiers who harassed Napoleon's invading army in 1808. Guevara would add an important chapter to the history of this romantic impulse—like Javier Mina, the Spaniard who crossed the Atlantic in 1816 to fight against his own country for the independence of Mexico, or like Byron on his way to support the Greeks against the Turks. War, for them all, was another form of poetry.

With Taibo, the reader follows intensely, step by step, Che's struggle in the Sierra Maestra, where he establishes a reputation as a skilled, egalitarian, and courageous leader of men. We witness Guevara's gradual discovery of the *guajiros*, the Cuban peasants, and the "magic aura" that they conferred upon him. It was from this genuine connection that Guevara, always disposed to devise general theories out of his personal experience, came to develop his notion of the central role of the peasantry in a revolution—a conception that has shown itself again and again to be dubious. History demonstrates that peasants usually do not share the ideals of urban university-educated revolutionaries. Yet Castro's revolution may have been an exception to this disillusioning rule, perhaps because of its promise (and substantial achievement) of ethnic liberation, raising the status of the *guajiros* (and the black underclass). These sections of the population strongly backed the Cuban revolution, and despite all that has gone disastrously wrong in Cuba, a good part of them may still support the Cuban government.

Taibo provides a more complete and nuanced picture of Che than Anderson, but both emphasize his recurrent struggle with severe attacks of asthma, and his delight in action that broke the downward pull of his illness. "Raging Serna" on the rugby fields became the *commandante* in the Sierra Maestra, putting himself boldly in the way of death (or dealing it out). He would always have something of the adolescent about him—as did the ideals of the '60s, which are humanely but critically portrayed in some of Castañeda's best pages. Guevara was always playing with death; he was always, in Castañeda's precise phrase, "escaping toward what lay ahead." And he was always ill at ease (like the spirit of his age) with doubts and ambiguities, with the essentially uncertain nature of reality.

Taibo's primary concern is with "the inner Che"; and though his book includes some critical judgments on Che's (and Castro's) character or actions, it is overwhelmingly positive toward its subject. We must turn to Anderson, and especially to Castañeda, for a more penetrating examination of various moves by Che, and the Cuban Revolution, in the chess game of politics that followed the intoxicating victory of the *barbudos*. Guevara loved the game of chess. On the chess-board of the world, however, a series of of matches came to be played in which Cuba was only one piece, a small if strident piece, ever more dependent on the turns of Soviet strategy.

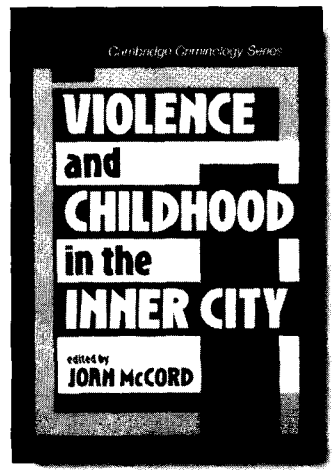
The Cuban victors believed that their moment of glory would last forever. They would build a just Cuba, autonomous, prosperous, proud, free, egalitarian. And in the abstract formulation of these ideas, Che went beyond his

Making our cities safer...

Violence and Childhood in the Inner City

Joan McCord, *Editor*

The contributors to this book believe that something can be done to make life in American cities safer, to make growing up in urban ghettos less risky, and to reduce the violence that so often afflicts urban childhood. They consider why there is so much violence, why some people become violent and others do not, and why violence is more prevalent in some areas. The authors also discuss how the urban environment affects childhood development. They review a variety of intervention strategies and consider when it is appropriate to use them and towards whom they should be targeted.



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comrades—beyond Castro himself, who always maintained an infinitely sharper and more harshly pragmatic sense of political reality. Victory transfigured Guevara, indelibly impressing the features of a personal (and incurable) idealism, immune to any refutation by reality: an absolute conviction of the superiority of the socialist world—especially the Soviet Union—as opposed to the West; an almost theological hatred of Yankee imperialism; a belief that the Cuban revolutionary experience could be exported to Latin America and the Third World in general; a total faith in the power of his will; an intolerance for complexity or ambivalence in action and ideas.

"Raging Serna" would create a utopia by implementing, in total purity, the principles in which he believed: immediate and total agrarian reform, nationalization of the economy, bureaucratic centralization, the eventual abolition of monetary transactions, moral rather than material incentives to increased production, and so on. He felt absolutely convinced that Cuba could attract unqualified and unconditional support from the countries of the communist bloc, in order to build a great industrial power in the Caribbean.

From the early days of the revolutionary victory, Guevara began to show the harsher side of the new man forged in war. The Cuban Revolution executed hundreds of accused war criminals from the Batista regime, and Che figured as an important revolutionary judge. Opinions differ on the degree of his severity, but he was certainly not opposed to retribution. And he became deeply involved in much darker aspects of the Cuban revolutionary state: the efficient apparatus of the Cuban security system and the repression of freedom of thought in the press and in university life. In Guanahacabibes, he would create Cuba's first labor camp, for the internment of those who "have committed transgressions of revolutionary morality to a less or greater degree."

Castañeda neither omits nor obscures this dark side of Guevara's career in power. With the same degree of honesty, he details the disasters of Cuban economic policy as it was managed (to a considerable degree) by Guevara. He stresses the general economic inexperience of the revolutionaries, the loss of technical expertise as the middle classes fled into exile, the scarcity of resources due to the American embargo, the "administrative chaos" that every revolution brings in its wake. I wish Castañeda had attended more to Che's economic illiteracy, to the virtual abolition of the free market, and to the other economic misconceptions that were deeply structured into all the economies of the socialist bloc.

Of course, the traditional incomprehension of the United States with respect to Latin America continued in full stride, culminating in the disaster of the invasion at the Bay of Pigs, which would serve as a powerful reinforcement for the revolutionary regime in Havana. In the meantime Che had done a stint as director of the National Bank of Cuba, and he would later become Minister of Industry. He tried to create heavy industry and to implement methods that would "organize and micromanage everything," says Castañeda, "regardless of the damage done by similar efforts in the USSR and socialist countries." But Guevara, who was an omnivorous reader, did not know the basic history of the country that he so ardently admired. His economic policies contributed to driving the Cuban economy into an unsustainable deficit, into chronic scarcities and the rationing of essential supplies.

What really mattered for Guevara was the transfiguration of the individual through moral incentives. A powerful egalitarian spirit infuses the descriptions of "the Sundays of solidarity in voluntary labor," with Guevara himself taking enthusiastic part—cutting cane, building schools, loading sacks of rice, exhausted but happy, working "to the sound of revolutionary songs." But voluntary labor was no remedy for economic failure. The Soviets, who were hardly the pure and generous Bolsheviks of Che's imagination, were thoroughly aware of Cuba's problems, and they began to recoil from the incessant stream of requests and demands.

During his guided visits to Russia and later to China, Che had not recognized (and later, he would refuse to concede) the profound offense to his own egalitarianism that was embodied in the privileges of the *nomenklatura*. And then the Russians began to stiffen before the endless wish-lists of purchases, gifts, and donations submitted to them by the Cubans. They would sometimes respond that they had their own economic needs. The shrewd Anatoly Dobrynin remarked that "Guevara was impossible, he wanted a small steel mill, an automobile factory.... We said to him ... that Cuba needed foreign exchange and the only way to get it was by doing what they did best: grow sugar." Guevara would begin to sour on the Soviet Union, and especially on what he saw as its orientation toward material incentives, which seemed perilously like the poison path of capitalism.

The Cuban missile crisis probably completed his disenchantment. The Russians had pressed the missiles on the Cubans and then had taken them away without consultation. It was clear that the real confrontation was between the the Soviet Union and the United States, that the Cuban government had no say and no control over the use of the missiles. But the Cubans were outraged by the Russian capitulation (which was later shown to have been not quite a capitulation, since the Americans secretly agreed to withdraw their own missiles from Turkey); and the Cuban rhetoric was hostile toward the Soviets, reckless. As reported by Castañeda, Che would later say to a British Communist newspaper (in an interview not fully published at the time) that "if they attack we shall fight to the end. If the rockets had remained, we would have used them all and directed them against the heart of the United States, including New York, in our fight against aggression." And Castañeda also gives Anastas Mikoyan's response to Che's expressed willingness to fight the Americans to the end: "We see your readiness to die beautifully, but we believe that it isn't worth dying beautifully."

Economic and political failures did not undermine Che's essential faith, but they certainly increased his sense of impotence and unease. He would turn his attention to "dreaming of horizons"; he would travel the world, to great effect, as the great ambassador of the revolution. By now considerably to the left of the stodgy Russians, he would try to carry the revolution in essence and in person to the rest of the world. He supported Cuban aid to various Latin American revolutionary groups, and he participated in planning and inspiring an abortive attempt to establish a guerrilla movement in his own Argentina. (A small disaster in itself: the small group was rapidly wiped out in 1964.)

Guevara's final ports of call were really the stages of his martyrdom: the Congo and Bolivia. Both adventures were so poorly conceived and so disastrously executed that one begins to wonder whether Che was not unconsciously seeking a kind of immolation as the supreme act of revolutionary creativity. His clandestine arrival in the Congo in 1965—leading a group of Afro-Caribbean Cubans—was designed to support the political heirs of the murdered Congolese leader Patrice Lumumba; but he found himself confronted with Congolese allies unable and unwilling to fight at anything near the level

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that was required to defeat the European mercenaries on the other side. He and his remaining men barely escaped with their lives. In Bolivia two years later, Guevara would impetuously launch his guerrilla movement at the wrong location with inadequate information and, though his men won a few early victories, they never really had a chance to establish or to expand their movement.

Castañeda adds an interesting political dimension to the end of the tale. By this time, Guevara was disenchanted with the Soviet Union, and with Cuba's constantly intensifying satellite status: it was not for this that a revolution had been made. He had become *persona non grata* to the Soviets and perhaps to Castro himself. Castañeda wonders whether Castro may not have abandoned Che to his fate in Bolivia, and shared a certain complicity by omission in the death of his old comrade. It is probably for this assertion (and other criticisms of Fidel) that Castañeda's book has been bitterly criticized in Cuba, most recently by Che's widow Aleida March, who also could not have been very pleased by Castañeda's reference to her extreme jealousy and her deplorable treatment of Che's first wife (and daughter by that wife)—an observation in sharp contrast to Anderson's careful respect for Aleida March, who was one of his important "sources."

Taibo again surpasses Anderson in his description of the Congo campaign (certainly in the original Spanish chapters of his book) and in the concluding agony of Bolivia. Che had always faced death bravely. In the Congo, he had been prevented by his men from making what would have been a suicidal decision to remain behind, almost alone, to cross 1,500 miles and join another small rebel force. In Bolivia, "moving on" to the next horizon without checking the lay of the land, Che charged into a fatal corner. The description of his final hours in a remote village, when the Bolivian high command ordered his death (it was opposed by the CIA, who wanted him for further questioning, but it was also not countermanded by American pressure) leaves no doubt that he was not a conscious suicide. (He might have shot himself at the moment of capture, but his M-1 was out of commission.)

The self-serving description by the Cuban radio-man Felix Rodríguez, who was working for the CIA, of the defeated Guevara greeting him as one honorable warrior to another at the moment of surrender, seems absurdly contrary to Che's character. Anderson seems inclined to accept the story, which is more

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Israel threatened by enemies. Israel is at peace with Egypt and with Jordan. But Israel is confronted by deadly enemies. Other Arab states are still in a declared or undeclared state of war with Israel. Iran, Moslem though not Arab, lurks in the background, its foremost military and political objective being the destruction of the state of Israel.

The PLO is a terror organization that has only one purpose: to kill Jews and to destroy the state of Israel. While the latter objective is beyond its reach, it has been most successful in the former. It seems almost incomprehensible that a group as supposedly level-headed as the previous government of Israel would have entered into a "peace agreement" with them. Not surprisingly, events since the famous "handshake" confirm such skepticism. Despite statements to the contrary, the PLO has still not complied with Israel's main requirement, namely that it forswear the clauses in its "covenant" that call for the destruction of Israel. Arafat and his lieutenants continue to make blood-curdling speeches to the Arab public, in which they re-assert their old goal of destroying Israel in "stages."

A Palestinian state—demilitarized?

The myth of demilitarization. The assumption that "Palestine" would be demilitarized is not tenable. The Arab nations would not allow it. But mobilization of the "demilitarized" Palestine wouldn't really be required.The weapons of preference of Arab terrorists are the Soviet-made Katyusha rockets, highly effective missiles, truck-mounted and mobile, ideal for hit-and-run raids against Israel. A look at the map makes clear that these rockets, short-range though they may be, would literally dominate the heartland of Israel. Easily moved and hidden along Israel's new eastern borders, which would be increased from 40 miles in length to over 200 miles, they would rain destruction over most of Israel. They would cover in their entirety Israel's narrow waist that holds 70% of the Jewish population of the country, 80% of its industrial base, its only international airport, and its most important military installations.

The Arabs danced on the roofs of their homes when Iraqi Scud missiles fell on Tel Aviv during the Gulf War. Since the signing of the "peace agreement" they have continued in unrestrained terror and murder against the Jews. Only incurable optimists can believe that an "autonomous" Palestine would wish to become a peaceful neighbor of Israel. If Israel ceded the Gaza Strip—the invasion route since before biblical times—and Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank") to its sworn enemies it would make the country indefensible. Tanks, warplanes, and missiles would only be needed for the final mopping-up process. In the meantime, mortars and Katyushas located on the Judean ridges—Israel's proposed new borders—would suffice to neutralize life and industrial and military activity in Israel. But one can expect that the new leaders of Israel clearly understand this danger and that they will not make concessions that will endanger the security of their country.

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Fever

The arsonist with closecropped hair
meandering down the neck of whitewashed air,
clad in wet leaves and plaid bathrobe,
flammable nightshirt underneath.

Trees limbs turned watery,
trunks red gray in the way faraway,
smoke choked the scene, every rung shook.

I was 10, rapped with polio and the night
rose from the yard like a large bird.

The ambulance blare cleaved
the air like meat under a knife.
From then on, everything was *before* or *after* like war.

Flames climbed through my kindling feet,
seeped down my arms
hot abdomen
chest
about-to-be-developed breasts.

Mouth, tongue, palate parched,
no water could appease my need to drink.

Where are my feet?

In the aftermath, I threw dead shoes of no use in a heap,
picked up a brush, a lure.

Cubes, nudes,
green paintings afloat in seedy forests but lush,
cool fish of all types.
I moved.

KAREN CHASE

evidence of the limits of his psychological understanding. Much more likely is the version of the event given by Taibo: that Che called Rodríguez a *gusano*, or a worm (the Cuban Revolution's designation for Cubans who had abandoned the island), and then exchanged insults with him. It was only when the drunken Bolivian sergeant with a pistol entered his hut that Che was sure that his death was imminent.

It was not long before the story of Guevara's final hours became a kind of sacred history for people of various inclinations on the left who in some measure agreed with his revolutionary ideas, and especially for those who shared the same temptation toward the absolute in hatred and in faith, the same almost religious devotion to violence and death. Throughout the 1970s and into the 1980s, the long-standing quarrel between the oppressive and omnipresent giant to the north and the self-protective and proud culture to the south found its terrible expression in a savage guerrilla war against "imperialism and its allies" in the countries of Latin America. Guevara had been the armed prophet of this movement, the model of these modern revolutionaries, the Latin children of Dostoevsky's "possessed." As he had written to his mother, during one of his first trips abroad after the victory of the Cuban revolution: "[I have] no house, no wife, no children [though by then he had them all], no brothers, my friends are those who think politically as I do and so long as they do.... I feel ... an absolute fatalistic sense of my mission which frees me of all fear."

Castañeda does not quite condemn the revolutionary movements that churned up Latin America from the 1960s through the 1980s, but he contemplates the period with a critical eye:

> Che endowed two generations of young people with the tools of that faith, and the fervor of that conviction. But he must also be held responsible for the wasted blood and lives that decimated those generations.... His death allowed him to sidestep a question he could never have answered: why so many university students from the region's emerging middle classes sallied forth so innocently to their slaughter....

These are strong words from an intellectual who, like so many others, supported the revolutionary actions of those years, but has now decided with the whole awful past in view, that democracy can be the only reliable mortar for the construction of societies less unequal and less unjust than has historically been the rule in Latin America.

The return of Che Guevara is certainly, in part, a media-created phenomenon. And this is certainly a curious moment for the resurgence of his image. Throughout Latin America, the guerrillas who follow his example are much fewer than they were ten or twenty years ago, when the world had a very different political and philosophical physiognomy. His most striking contemporary successor is installed in Chiapas, in the mountains of the Mexican southeast—another revolutionary man of action enveloped in the smoke of his pipe and his fantasies, a man of books and dreams, of purification and redemption, incessantly glorifying the prospect of personal and ethnic self-immolation. Yet *Subcommandante* Marcos has not drawn the young to follow him into the mountains.

And Marcos has perhaps learned something more from the life of Guevara. Guevara shifted from his concern with the plight of Latin American Indians to a much more abstract Marxist perspective. Marcos has moved in the opposite direction. His troops are not simply peasants, they are truly aggrieved Indians. His movement has considerable support not only among Mexican students, but also from important sectors of the Church—support that Guevara would likely have disdained. The tactics of *Subcommandante* Marcos look to the future, as much to the postmodern world of publicity as to the archaic universe of guerrilla heroism. And the horrifying massacre of 45 Indians, mostly women and children, by thugs apparently in the employ of Chiapas landlords (with perhaps the tacit approval of the local government) has justifiably shocked the world and drawn more support to the Zapatistas. Marcos may or may not have accepted democracy, but it now seems possible that he may have more success than his Cuban precursor.

And yet the myth of Che still retains its emotional power. The legacy of the doctrine of the "justified violence" of a people against a tyrant has been especially strong in Latin America. And on many occasions in our unfortunate history the doctrine has been fully justified. And yet the truth about our experience with revolution cannot be denied. It is always possible that a group of univer-

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sity-trained "jesuits of war" (Guevara's own term) can appoint themselves the vanguard and the expression of the people, and create a government—as in the Cuban Revolution—that can become as cruel and repressive as the dictatorship that it fought to overthrow. If there is to be a reconsideration of Che Guevara, then it must also recognize that he bears his full share of responsibility for the catastrophe of Cuban communism, as the similarly romanticized Trotsky deserved to share the terrible blame for what communism did to Russia. Guevara and Trotsky were ennobled by exile, defeat, and death; but they (and their posthumous reputations) must not escape the severe judgment of history.

It is too easy to put up posters of Che and to believe in abstractions that deny reality, in the creation of the "new man." Clinging to this kind of revolutionary faith not only denies the democratic tradition, it also tarnishes the value of the single element in Che's life that can have true significance for our time: his sense of equality. Perhaps such faith in equality is all the more necessary now that a spirit of localized selfishness runs through much of the world, capable of swallowing, as if down a black hole, all sense of fraternity and shared meaning. But equality is also not the end of the story. If it is imposed from above, equality may destroy something just as precious, which is freedom. The world has seen enough heroes and governments who sacrifice human liberty in the name of a utopian ideal. Surely in Latin America, where we are struggling to strengthen our fragile democracies, the life of Che Guevara is a cautionary tale. The romantic "*condottiere* of the twentieth century" brought mainly misery, and we are lucky that he is gone.

—Translated by Hank Heifetz

Life & Times of John C.

By Caryl Phillips

Boyhood: Scenes from Provincial Life by J.M. Coetzee

(Viking, 166 pp., $22.95)

J.M. Coetzee's seven works of fiction and three collections of essays have been produced in the long shadow cast by the last days of the apartheid regime and the emergence of what has become known as "the new South Africa." Unlike many of his South African literary colleagues, black and white, Coetzee has always maintained a wary vigilance over his creative imagination. He has been keen that it not collapse into such clumsy antinomies as black/white, left/right, revolutionary/reactionary, or any of the other oppositions that threaten to reduce the complexity of life to easily adhesive slogans. To this end he has fought most vigorously against being labeled a political writer. "Why should one automatically try to interpret my thinking in political terms?" he asked, in 1985. "It is not necessary to know my ideas to understand my novels."

John Michael Coetzee was born in 1940 in Cape Town, the son of a failed attorney and a mother who was a schoolteacher. He attended the University of Cape Town, where he received degrees in mathematics and English, and thereafter he moved to London, where he worked as a computer programmer. In 1965 he left London for the United States, where he studied for a Ph.D. in linguistics at the University of Texas at Austin. Between 1968 and 1971, he taught at the State University of New York in Buffalo, before returning to South Africa to pursue his academic career and to begin his literary one.

For most of the turbulent 1960s, then, Coetzee was exposed to the travails of the world beyond his native South Africa, in particular to the civil rights and anti-war struggles in the United States. It is not by accident that his first published work, *Dusklands* (1974), contains two novellas which reflect the peripatetic nature of Coetzee's literary apprenticeship. The first, entitled "The Vietnam Project," deals with an American specialist in psychological warfare who is working "in the spirit of absoluteness" on a propaganda project to destroy the country of Vietnam. The second novella, "The Narrative of Jacobus Coetzee," takes the writer back to his homeland. It concerns a fictionalized relative of Coetzee who, in the 1760s, destroys an entire South African tribe because he assumes that they have humiliated him by their indifference to his authority.

It was in the 1960s that South Africa became the world's whipping boy, as it edged closer to social and political catastrophe. In 1960 the Sharpeville massacre took place, and in 1966 the Prime Minister of South Africa, H.F. Verwoerd, was assassinated. A temporarily expatriated Coetzee was being reminded, at a distance, that he must step warily through the minefield that was his country's projected sense of itself and its history. *Boyhood*, his new memoir, makes it clear that he had practiced this careful high-stepping already as a child. He grew up in a country that sought to make its history and its outrageous social arrangements conveniently explicable, not only to those living abroad, but more importantly to those white boys who would one day become white men and rule. In the case of young Coetzee, however, the litany of falsehoods failed to take root.

In the fictions that follow *Dusklands*, Coetzee began to locate his novels in a geographical and political setting that implied South Africa, but he did so without binding himself to the specifics that would preoccupy a realist. In this way, he accomplished two things: he freed himself from being viewed as a mere commentator on the political situation in South Africa; and this geographical anonymity enabled him to isolate and to scrutinize the psychological traumas of his "exposed" characters, such as the magistrate in *Waiting for the Barbarians* (1980), who attempts to placate the nomadic people of his territory but is eventually imprisoned and tortured. Or, most successfully, the eponymous hero of *Life & Times of Michael K* (1983), an apparently slow-witted and friendless young gardener who, after his mother dies, is left to fend for himself in a country at war. The vulnerable character in an unspecified landscape is a central component of Coetzee's fictional technique.

Coetzee's characters exist in imaginary "societies" in which there is no shared culture and no shared understanding of what constitutes history. His characters struggle to survive alone; they do not make history, they endure it. The magistrate and Michael K live in worlds that they are powerless to change, and in which the state abuses its power in an attempt to identify friends from enemies. Magda, in *In the Heart of the Country* (1977), is similarly vulnerable. Repulsed by her father's relationship with his African workman's wife, she murders her father and then begins a relationship with the workman. Her world eventually

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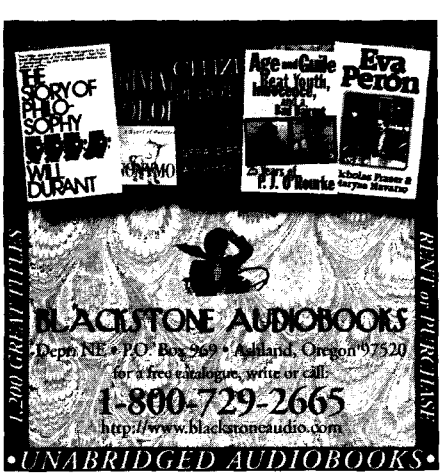

collapses into insanity, and the reader learns to distrust the ravings and the inventions of her unhinged and lonely mind. Coetzee's symbolic and at times allegorical fiction differs greatly from the realism of an older generation of South African writers, best represented by Alan Paton. Yet the self-conscious postmodernism of his narratives also sets Coetzee apart from such contemporaries as André Brink and Nadine Gordimer. His best writing manages to achieve acute psychological insight while never falling victim to what Cynthia Ozick (in a review of *Life & Times of Michael K*) called "the vice of abstraction."

In 1990, Coetzee published his sixth novel, *Age of Iron*, and four years later his seventh novel, *The Master of Petersburg*. These two novels signaled a clear change of literary direction. *Age of Iron* is concerned with Mrs. Elizabeth Curren, a retired professor of classics who is dying of cancer and writes to her daughter in the United States about a clearly named and labeled South Africa in the terminal stages of apartheid, just as she is in the terminal stages of her own disease. It is a documentary novel, curiously detailed by most standards, astonishingly so for Coetzee. Yet it is unconvincing, and lacks drama. The narrator's tone is flat, and the staunchly urban setting seems unsuited to Coetzee's lyrical pen. At one point the elderly Mrs. Curren, who is waking up to the effects of apartheid on the black citizens of her country, announces somewhat melodramatically, "now my eyes are open and I can never close them again." Her interior narrative is rhetorical and clumsy:

> I say to myself that I am watching not the lie but the space behind the lie where the truth ought to be. But is it true? I dozed (it is still yesterday I am writing about), read, dozed again. I made tea, put on a record. Bar by bar the Goldberg Variations erected themselves in the air. I crossed to the window. It was nearly dark. Against the garage wall the man was squatting, smoking, the point of his cigarette glowing. Perhaps he saw me, perhaps not. Together we listened.
>
> At this moment, I thought, I know how he feels as surely as if he and I were making love.'

And *The Master of Petersburg* is even more troubling. The novel is set in 1869, and concerns Dostoevsky's journey to St. Petersburg from Germany, and his subsequent sojourn in the city as he struggles to come to terms with the sudden death of his stepson. Dostoevsky follows the "ghost" of his stepson, trying to determine whether the boy committed suicide or was murdered by the local police. Again, we are in a recognizable landscape, one that is even peopled with figures from history, but as with *Age of Iron*, the plot seems contrived and uninspired, and the language patently fails to achieve the poetic intensity of Coetzee's novels of the 1980s.

Some have argued that there has been a falling off in the quality of Coetzee's work that is somehow connected to the collapse of the apartheid regime. But Coetzee was never a writer who used apartheid to hitch a literary ride. He left that to others. The engine that drives Coetzee is not political. Indeed, it is not, in the strictest sense of the word, literary. Coetzee is a trained linguist and theorist, who revels in deconstruction. His later novels find him more interested in examining theoretical notions of authority—narrative and linguistic—than in drawing another non-specific landscape and peopling it with individuals who are powerless in the face of history's malignity.

A concern with authority and authorship is clearly discernible in Coetzee's early novels, but the theoretical aspects of these novels are properly married to acute characterization and a dazzling use of language. Consider, for instance, the striking opening lines of *Waiting for the Barbarians*:

> I have never seen anything like it: two little discs of glass suspended in front of his eyes in loops of wire. Is he blind? I could understand it if he wanted to hide blind eyes. But he is not blind. The discs are dark, they look opaque from the outside, but he can see through them. He tells me they are a new invention.

It is the leaden yet precise language of the later novels that so disappoints. It lacks passion; and more damagingly, it fails to obscure the theoretical scaffolding upon which the fiction has been raised. In *The Master of Petersburg*, Dostoevsky talks with an acquaintance of his stepson, but behind the words of the character we can hear the bluff and bluster of a university lecturer:

> We are talking about a pamphlet, Fyodor Mikhailovich. Who cares who actually writes a pamphlet? Words are like the wind, here today, gone tomorrow. No one owns words. We are talking about crowds. Surely you have been in a crowd. A crowd isn't interested in fine points of authorship. A crowd has no intellect, only passions. Or do you mean something else?

Do we care about Dostoevsky searching for his son? Do we ever really care about Mrs. Curren in *Age of Iron*? The truth is we cannot get close to their hearts because the author does not seem interested in taking us there. And we cannot get close to the landscape of their world because, although this world

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actually does exist, the writer appears to be indifferent to its topography. In one passage Dostoevsky and his mistress are walking through the streets of St. Petersburg:

> They have reached the embankment. Crossing the street, he takes her arm. Side by side they lean against the rail by the waterside.

But there is no description of the city, the street, or the river. Not now, not ever, which is remarkable for a city as visually arresting as St. Petersburg.

If one examines Coetzee's nonfiction, one will detect a similar movement away from the intuitions of a writer responding to the world, and toward an almost scientific analysis of the subjects under scrutiny. *White Writing: On the Culture of Letters in South Africa*, which appeared in 1988, contains seven thought-provoking essays that discuss writing from the late seventeenth century to the present day by a people "no longer European, yet not African." Eight years later, however, there appeared *Giving Offence: Essays on Censorship*, a troubling, heavy-footed book that lumbers toward a highly questionable conclusion: that the censor is like the writer and the writer is like the censor, and that all struggle against tyranny is to some extent futile because it will eventually result in our making tyrants of ourselves. Mercifully, we have the evidence of Coetzee's best fiction to remind us that this is not necessarily so.

Coetzee has consistently sought to challenge the authority of master-narrators; and his most successful analysis of this condition of master-narrator as supposedly authoritative witness, and to some extent unquestioned creator of history, is accomplished in *Foe* (1987). This novel marks a transition between the unidentifiable landscapes of *Waiting for the Barbarians* and *Life & Times of Michael K* and the clearly identifiable locales of Coetzee's last two novels. It opens on the desert island of Robinson Crusoe, a place in the "real" world, but a place without society. Susan Barton, an English woman, is washed up onto the island where she encounters Cruso (Coetzee's spelling) and Friday, a slave whose tongue has been cut out, thus rendering him speechless.

Eventually all three are rescued, but Cruso dies on the return journey to England. Once Susan Barton and Friday reach England, the author Daniel Foe is engaged to write Susan's story. Yet the more Susan Barton learns about Foe's process of creation, the more she re-

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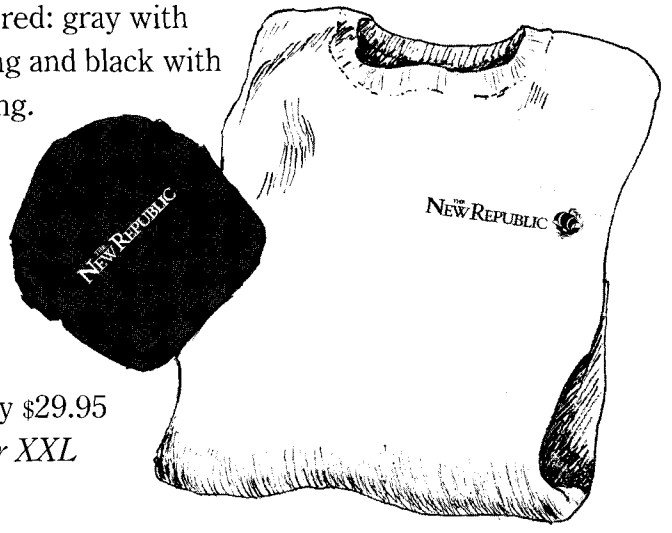

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cognizes fabrication, distortion, and invention as the central pillars of "truth" upon which the story is being constructed. There is also the additional problem of Foe and Coetzee, "author" and author, wondering who, if anyone, has the right to speak on Friday's behalf. Friday's provocative silence represents the tongueless mute condition of millions of people whose history is liable to be distorted and lost in the clumsy process of interpretation and master-narration.

Boyhood is a memoir by a writer whose literary output has successfully resisted an autobiographical reading. His personal life has been shrouded in privacy, so writing a memoir would seem to be an unlikely act; but Coetzee is cunning. *Boyhood* is written in the third-person, which suggests construction rather than confession. Even in his memoir, then, Coetzee is guarded.

Our first glimpse of him is as a tormented, vulnerable boy, very much like one of his own characters.

> There are ants in Worcester, flies, plagues of fleas. Worcester is only ninety miles from Cape Town, yet everything is worse here. He has a ring of fleabites above his socks, and scabs where he has scratched. Some nights he cannot sleep for the itching. He does not see why they ever had to leave Cape Town.

We soon learn that the world of young John Coetzee is a world riven with disturbing divisions. Between masters and servants:

> He burns with curiosity about the lives they live. Do they wear vests and underpants like white people? Do they each have a bed? Do they sleep naked or in their work-clothes or do they have pyjamas? Do they eat proper meals, sitting at a table with knives and forks?
>
> He has no way of answering these questions, for he is discouraged from visiting their houses. It would be rude, he is told—rude because Ros and Freek would find it embarrassing.
>
> If it is not embarrassing to have Ros's wife and daughter work in the house, he wants to ask, cooking meals, washing clothes, making beds, why is it embarrassing to visit them in their house?

Between English and Afrikaner:

> In Worcester the English are a minority, in Reunion Park a tiny minority. Aside from himself and his brother, who are English only in a way, there are only two English boys: Rob Hart and a small, wiry boy named Billy Smith whose father works on the railways and who has a sickness that makes his skin flake off (his mother forbids him to touch any of the Smith children). When he lets it slip that Rob Hart is being flogged by Miss Oosthuizen, his parents seem at once to know why. Miss Oosthuizen is one of the Oosthuizen clan, who are Nationalists; Rob Hart's father, who owns a hardware store, was a United Party town councillor until the elections of 1948.

Between Coloureds and Natives:

> One can dismiss the Natives, perhaps, but one cannot dismiss the Coloured people. The Natives can be argued away because they are latecomers, invaders from the north, and have no right to be here. The Natives one sees in Worcester are, for the most part, men dressed in old army coats, smoking hooked pipes, who live in tiny tent-shaped corrugated-iron kennels along the railway lines, men whose strength and patience are legendary. They have been brought here because they do not drink, as Coloured men do, because they can do heavy labour under a blazing sun where lighter, more volatile Coloured men would collapse. They are men without women, without children, who arrive from nowhere and can be made to disappear into nowhere.

These divisions in society are given credence by the testimony of the adults who surround the young boy. Coetzee remembers his childhood friend Eddie, a native boy with whom he would wrestle:

> The smell of Eddie's body stays with him from these bouts, and the feel of his head, the high bullet-shaped skull and the close, coarse hair. They have harder heads than white people, his father says. That is why they are so good at boxing. For the same reason, his father says, they will never be good at rugby. In rugby you have to think fast, you can't be a bonehead.

Casual racism envelops the life of the young boy, but it never threatens to overwhelm him. He is aware of the myths and the inconsistencies in his father's opinions, and he begins to wonder about the irrationality of the whole South African world-picture. A boxing match between the South African Vic Toweel and the foreigner Manuel Ortiz, forces the young Coetzee to once again question the authority of the opinions which govern the world in which he lives:

> For days the newspapers are full of pictures of the fight. Viccie Toweel is a national hero. As for him, his elation soon dwindles. He is still happy that Toweel has beaten Ortiz, but has begun to wonder why. Who is Toweel to him? Why should he not be free to choose between Toweel and Ortiz in boxing as he is free to choose between Hamiltons and Villagers in rugby? Is he bound to support Toweel, this ugly little man with hunched shoulders and a big nose and tiny blank, black eyes, because Toweel (despite his funny name) is a South African? Do South Africans have to support other South Africans even if they don't know them?

As *Boyhood* progresses, the young Coetzee becomes increasingly anxious about the contradictions and the silences in the South African world around him. And he begins to write, but only after he has won the battle for language. In a country as deeply divided as South Africa, it comes as no surprise to learn that one's choice of language is as powerfully charged with meaning as all the other choices that society foists upon one. Typically and stubbornly, though, Coetzee refuses to yield to one camp or the other. An English speaker, he finds himself unwilling to yield up the Afrikaans language:

> One thing about the English that disappoints him, that he will not imitate, is their contempt for Afrikaans. When they lift their eyebrows and superciliously mispronounce Afrikaans words, as if *veld* spoken with a *v* were the sign of a gentleman, he draws back from them: they are wrong, and, worse than wrong, comical. For his part, he makes no concessions, even among the English: he brings out the Afrikaans words as they ought to be brought out, with all their hard consonants and difficult vowels.

Boyhood is unexpectedly revealing about the sources of the thematic anxieties that populate Coetzee's writing. Yet the memoir becomes really surprising, and really moving, when it pushes beyond these concerns and tackles the writer's difficult relationship with his parents. He grew up in a country town not far from Cape Town, on a farm which had been in his father's family for some years. At school he was a gifted pupil, but at home he was a troubled, lonely child who sought refuge from an unhappy family life by playing on his beloved veld. He had little respect for his father, but he loved his mother deeply. From an early age the young Coetzee sought to escape the dull restrictions of his home and to please with his writing:

> For Mr Whelan he writes essays on The Character of Mark Antony, on The Character of Brutus, on Road Safety, on Sport, on Nature. Most of his essays are dull, mechanical performances; but occasionally he feels a spurt of excitement as he writes, and the pen begins to fly over the page. In one of his essays a highwayman waits under cover at the roadside. His horse snorts softly, its breath turns to vapour in the cold night air. A ray of moonlight falls like a slash across his face; he holds his pistol under the flap of his coat to keep the powder dry.
>
> The highwayman makes no impression on Mr Whelan. Mr Whelan's pale eyes flicker across the page, his pencil comes down: 6½. 6½ is the mark he almost always gets for his essays; never more than 7. Boys with English names get 7½ or 8.

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Eventually Coetzee's father collapses with illness, and he endures a painful deterioration that fills the young boy with contempt. His father embarrasses him, for his limited vision of the world can never match that of his brilliant son. The young John Coetzee is anxious to expose weakness and hypocrisy in his headlong rush to maturity, and against his will the father finds himself swept up in the son's whirlwind acquisition of adolescent "knowledge," and then summarily dumped when the son decides that the father is doing little more than impairing his youthful vision:

> He steps closer. His eyes are growing accustomed to the light. His father is wearing pyjama pants and a cotton singlet. He has not shaved. There is a red V at his throat where sunburn gives way to the pallor of his chest. Beside the bed is a chamber-pot in which cigarette-stubs float in brownish urine. He has not seen anything uglier in his life.
>
> There are no pills. The man is not dying, merely sleeping. He does not have the courage to take sleeping-pills, just as he does not have the courage to go out and look for a job.

As a boy Coetzee feels compelled to learn how to negotiate the falsehoods that white South Africa offers up to those who wish to belong. In short, he develops the mentality of the writer. He fills his world with doubt, he rejects authority in all its forms—political, social, personal—and he cultivates the ability to resign himself to the overwhelming insecurity of the heart. He writes of his mother:

> This woman was not brought into the world for the sole purpose of loving him and protecting him and taking care of his wants. On the contrary, she had a life before he came into being, a life in which there was no requirement upon her to give him the slightest thought. At a certain time in her life she bore him; she bore him and she decided to love him; perhaps she chose to love him even before she bore him; nevertheless, she chose to love him, and therefore she can choose to stop loving him.

Coetzee's eventual rejection of his father's authority mirrors his rejection of the larger world of easy connections and lazy judgements that is South Africa. What he puts in its place is his love for "weak" people: white, Afrikaner, Coloured, Native, it matters little to Coetzee.

The memoir ends with death—not the death of his father but the death of his Aunt Annie, who was a schoolteacher. A grim and beautiful scene marks the beginning of Coetzee's passage out of boyhood toward the adult calling of writing. As Aunt Annie lies in the rain waiting for somebody to bury her, the young boy finds himself wondering about her books:

> He is left alone to do the thinking. How will he keep them all in his head, all the books, all the people, all the stories? And if he does not remember them, who will?

But he remembers.

CARYL PHILLIPS is the author, most recently, of *The Nature of Blood* (Knopf).

TRB *continued from page 6*

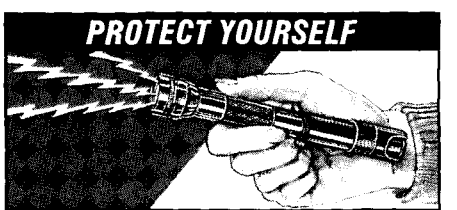
Cuba reflect wishful thinking, not a tough-minded assessment of the economic realities of the island. Cuba long ago defaulted on billions of dollars in loans from European and Canadian banks—money it borrowed despite the embargo, then frittered away. Its reserves depleted, Cuba has recently been forced to finance critical imports through short-term loans at double-digit interest rates. Restarting trade between Cuba and the U.S. would require a huge bailout from multilateral financial institutions. Cuba is not yet a member of those instruments of American imperialism, but even if it joined, would Castro agree to restructure his island according to the dictates of the World Bank? He didn't listen to his last patron, Mikhail Gorbachev. Indeed, Castro has jailed (or shot) people rather than take their sensible economic advice. The modest market reforms Castro has grudgingly allowed of late are the exception that proves the rule.

The cleverest variant of the anti-embargo argument holds that the U.S. should offer a partial lifting of the sanctions in return for the step-by-step granting of political and economic freedoms to Cuba. The Clinton administration flirted with this notion, but the Cuban-American lobby snuffed it. In theory, it's a good idea; in practice, it has the fatal flaw of depending on Castro's acquiescence in his own gradual ouster.

Embargo-lifters believe the myth that trade and "engagement" with the West brought down the Soviet Union. Actually, the Soviets were undone by a good cop, bad cop routine. Europe and Canada plied them with economic goodies, while Ronald Reagan's stern anti-communism forced them into ruinous defense spending and deprived them of international legitimacy. Castro faces a version of this now. In any case, the notion that democratic reform in Cuba should depend on a gesture from the United States seems odd. Even if the embargo is bloody-minded and atavistic, Castro's position—"Socialism or Death"—is many times crazier. Given that the end of the cold war discredited Castro and his worldview, why should America make the first move? What would help the Cuban people more: Additional hand-wringing by American pundits about U.S. policy, or an unequivocal demand from those same elites for free elections now?

The embargo may be a futile gesture, but it is not an empty gesture. It sends a message: the United States will have nothing to do with the tyranny 90 miles from its shores. A definitive verdict on the hard line must await Castro's inevitable passing. My hunch, to paraphrase Castro himself, is that history will absolve it.

CHARLES LANE



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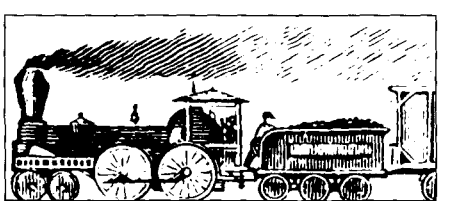

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WASHINGTON DIARIST

Epistle to the Hebrews

THE CULTURAL WARS OF AMERICA have arrived at the gates of Auschwitz. On December 5, 1997, a letter was sent to the director of the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington. Six Jewish conservatives, among them Elliot Abrams, Michael Horowitz, and Michael Medved, wrote of "the need to examine the Museum's long-running film on the origins of anti-Semitism." They charged that "the film advances a profoundly inaccurate thesis: that Christianity and Christian leaders were the initial cause of anti-Semitism and have at all times been its major proponents." The letter is an ignorant and indecent document. It is all *kampf* and no *kultur*, a model of the traduction of history by politics.

"THE FILM TAKES THE CLEAR POSITION that anti-Semitism originated with Christianity," these defenders of Christianity complain. It makes no mention of Pharaoh and Haman and Antiochus! But what did the arch-fiends of antiquity have to do with was done to the Jews between 1933 and 1945? Perhaps these conservatives mean to suggest that Pharaoh and Haman and Antiochus and Hitler were one and the same fate; but that is not history, it is historiosophy. (And why are they soft on Amalek?) They demand also that the film "note Islam's theology and its often violent practice of anti-Semitism." But there is a simple reason that it is not incumbent upon a film about anti-Semitism in the Holocaust Museum to remark upon the prejudice of Muslims. It is that Auschwitz is not a town in Saudi Arabia.

PERHAPS BENJAMIN NETANYAHU can find a use for this letter as he implores Jerry Falwell to save Israel from Bill Clinton. For the letter offers learned testimonials. "Writing in the twelfth century, Maimonides noted that Christianity was a force responsible for spreading the Torah itself through distant parts of the world. Writing in the twentieth century, Freud described anti-Semitism as a psychological reaction of persons who rejected Christianity, sought freedom from its ethical commands, and wished to reduce its influence." The godless Voltairean liberals in Washington are concealing all this! Alas, the testimonials are not learned enough. What Maimonides actually wrote was this: "Jesus the Nazarene ... interpreted the Torah and its precepts in such a fashion as to lead to their total annulment," and "he caused Israel to be destroyed by the sword, their remnant to be dispersed and humiliated." What Freud actually wrote was this: "When once the Apostle Paul had posited universal love between men as the foundation of his Christian community, extreme intolerance on the part of Christendom towards those who remained outside it became the inevitable consequence." (The conservatives are sloppily paraphrasing a piece of Freud's analysis of anti-Semitism in *Moses and Monotheism*, an outrageous book that itself resorts to racialist categories.)

"FOR ALL THE SINS OF anti-Semitism committed in its name," the letter proclaims, "Christianity's historic effect has been democratizing and civilizing." This is mere uplift. In America, democracy was the achievement of heaven-fearing people. In Europe, democracy was the achievement of heaven-storming people. And it was in Europe—the point seems to need repeating—that the Jews were almost completely exterminated. The brutal and incontrovertible truth is that Auschwitz was created in the heart of Christian civilization. And Auschwitz was not the first time that Christian civilization inspired, supported, or countenanced an attempt to destroy the Jews physically. It is not anti-Christian to insist upon the Christian complicity in all this evil. Indeed, for half a century the Christian conscience has been wrestling mightily with it; but here are these Jews, counseling rest and recontextualization.

THE LETTER MAINTAINS THAT "Hitler acted on the assumption Christianity was an enemy force that needed to be destroyed." It is true that the Nazi ideology was hostile to Christianity, that it preached a new paganism. In the evolution of modern anti-Semitism from medieval anti-Semitism, there were continuities and there were discontinuities. But the Holocaust was not a war against the Christians. Hitler enjoyed the overwhelming collaboration of the Christian churches, in Germany and elsewhere. These apologists are not masters of proportion. They prefer to dwell on "the brave anti-Nazi resistance groups comprised of Catholic and Protestant clerics and leaders." They adduce "righteous Gentiles," unaware of the terrible admission that is contained in that honorific. And they cite Dietrich Bonhoeffer, of course. They are not aware that in 1933 he reported that, in the matter of the Jews, "the most sensible people have lost their heads and their entire Bible."

SO HOW DID AUSCHWITZ COME TO pass in the democratizing and civilizing orbit of Christianity? "Enlightenment-based racism was far more the precursor of Hitler's anti-Semitism than the church-based anti-Semitism with which the film is preoccupied." Never mind that the film candidly portrays the anti-Jewish virulence of the Enlightenment in some of its manifestations. Never mind that Hitler represented the most spectacular revolt *against the Enlightenment* in European history. (It was communism, not fascism, that acted on the totalitarian possibilities of rationalism.) A surfeit of reason murdered the Jews!

THESE CONSERVATIVES hilariously cite Nietzsche as the prophet who warned against the consequences of the collapse of religious faith. (He was the prophet who reveled in those consequences.) And to prove that "the Enlightenment also led to modern-day racial theories of anti-Semitism," they observe that this is "indicated by the title alone of Arthur Hertzberg's *The French Enlightenment and the Jews: The Origins of Modern Anti-Semitism*." The title alone is all that the fools seem to have read. For the book documents what its author rightly calls "the glories and the tragedies" of the Enlightenment. There were glories. For the Jews in Europe, the Enlightenment also brought the Emancipation—civil liberties for Jews, and the ideals of tolerance upon which they were premised. Perhaps these conservatives think that emancipation was a mistake, though they would have some more explaining to do. In any event, the enfranchisement of the Jews in Europe (and later in America) was achieved by resisting the religious dimensions of Western politics and culture. It was one of liberalism's great gifts.

BUT HERE ARE THE SPOILED CHILdren of enlightenment, tinkering with the inconvenient tale. They declare that "the film repeats and propagates libels of Christianity." Libels! These Jews are conservatives who have made a career out of the charge of "moral equivalence." Do they know anything about the history of "libel" in the entanglements between Christians and Jews? This is not only error. It is also dishonor.

LEON WIESELTIER

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TEXTUALISM & THE CONSTITUTION

A SYMPOSIUM

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FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 13

PANEL I: TEXTUALISM AND DEMOCRATIC LEGITIMACY
Principal: Jed Rubenfeld, Yale Law School
Commentators: Lillian R. BeVier, U.V.A. School of Law; Judge Frank H. Easterbrook, U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit; Michael W. McConnell, University of Utah

PANEL II: TEXTUALISM AND THE BILL OF RIGHTS
Principal: Akhil Amar, Yale Law School
Commentators: Philip C. Bobbitt, University of Texas School of Law; Suzanna Sherry, University of Minnesota; David A. Strauss, University of Chicago Law School

PANEL III: TEXTUALISM AND FEDERALISM
Principal: Lawrence Lessig, Harvard Law School
Commentators: Steven G. Calabresi, Northwestern University School of Law; Bradford R. Clark, G.W.U. Law School; Deborah Jones Merritt, Ohio State University College of Law

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 14

PANEL IV: TEXTUALISM AND THE CIVIL WAR AMENDMENTS
Principal: Jeffrey Rosen, G.W.U. Law School
Commentators: Michael Kent Curtis, Wake Forest University School of Law; Walter Dellinger, Duke University School of Law; John Hart Ely, University of Miami School of Law

PANEL V: TEXTUALISM AND ORIGINAL UNDERSTANDING
Principal: William Eskridge, Georgetown University Law Center
Commentators: Ira C. Lupu, G.W.U. Law School; John Manning, Columbia University School of Law; Judge Stephen Williams, U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit

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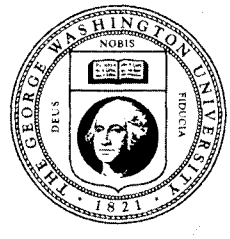

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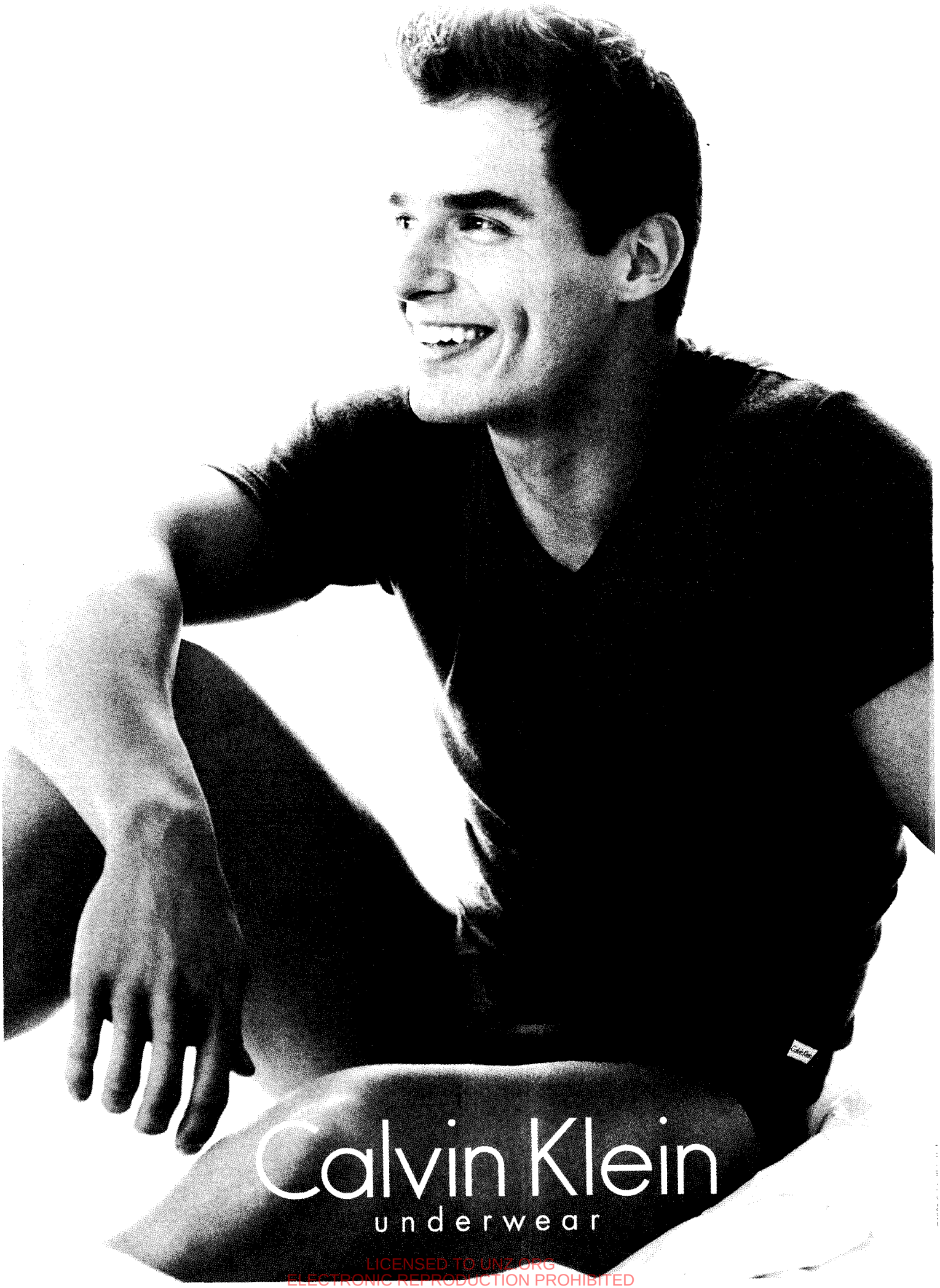

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